





# A WILL ETERNAL

BOOK 01

*Er Gen*

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

# ***A Will Eternal***

(一念永恒)

by

**Er Gen**

(耳根)

# Synopsis

---

One will to ceate oceans. One will to summon the mulberry fields.

One will to slaughter countless devils. One will to eradicate innumerable immortals.

Only my will... is eternal.

# Copyright © 2016 by Lisa Hayes

---

All rights reserved.

English Translation by DeathBlade @ [Wuxiaworld](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

This is a free eBook. You are free to give it away (in unmodified form) to whomever you wish.

No part of this eBook may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

# Chapter 1: I'm Bai Xiaochun

---

Mount Hood lay in the Eastwood Mountain Range, and at its base was a quaint little village. The villagers there lived off the land, and didn't have much to do with the outside world.

Currently it was dawn, and the villagers were congregated at the village gate to see off a young man of fifteen or sixteen years of age. He seemed thin and weak, but had a healthy, fair complexion, and an overall charming appearance. He wore an ordinary green robe that had apparently been washed so many times it was nearly worn through. Something about the way he was dressed, plus the innocent look in his eyes, made him seem exceptionally quick-witted.

His name was [Bai Xiaochun](#).

“Dear Elders and fellow villagers,” he said, “I am on my way to learn about Immortal cultivation. I shall miss all of you!” The young man wore a slightly pained expression, as if he couldn't bear to part with his fellow villagers. This made him look even more charming than before.

The surrounding villagers exchanged glances, shrugged helplessly, and then pretended to look even more reluctant to see him leave.

A white-haired old man stepped out of the crowd and said, “Xiaochun, ever since your dad and mom left us, oh so long ago, you... you have been, er-” he paused for a moment “-such a good

kid!!” Seeing that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t left yet, he continued, “Don’t tell me you’re not interested in living forever? All you have to do is become an Immortal, and then you can live forever! That’s a really, really long time! Well, it’s time for you to leave now. Even a baby eagle must learn to fly eventually.

“No matter what situations you run into out there, you have to hang in there and keep moving forward. Once you leave the village, you can’t come back, because your path will always lie ahead, not behind!” The old man patted Bai Xiaochun kindly on the shoulder.

“Live forever....” Bai Xiaochun murmured. A tremor ran through him, and a look of determination slowly filled his eyes. Under the encouraging gazes of the old man and the other villagers, he nodded his head seriously and looked around at everyone one last time. Finally, he turned and walked away from the village.

As he disappeared off into the distance, the villagers started to look more and more excited. Their forlorn expressions turned to those of joy, and the kind-faced old man began to tremble. Tears even streamed down his face.

“Justice from Heaven! The [weasel](#)... is finally gone! Who was it that told him they saw an Immortal in the area? Whoever it was, I’m going to give you a huge reward on behalf of the village!”

The village was soon echoing with cries of rejoicing. Some people even took out gongs and drums and began banging them excitedly.

“The weasel is gone,” someone said, “but oh, my poor chickens. He hated the roosters crowing at dawn, so he somehow got all the kids in the village to eat every chicken we had....”

“Today is the beginning of a new era!”

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was still fairly close to the village, and could actually hear the sounds of the gongs and drums. He even caught wind of some of the cries of excitement.

He stopped in his tracks, a strange expression on his face. After a moment, he cleared his throat and proceeded on his way. Accompanied by the faint sounds of rejoicing, he began to make his way toward Mount Hood.

Mount Hood wasn't a very tall mountain, but it was covered with thick vegetation. Therefore, despite the fact that it was dawn, beneath the trees, it was dark and quiet.

“Double-Dog told me that he was hunting some wild pigs a few days ago and saw an Immortal flying around....” Bai Xiaochun proceeded along, heart thumping. Suddenly, a rustling sound could be heard from some nearby shrubs. It almost sounded like a wild pig, and it immediately caused Bai Xiaochun to grow extremely nervous. The hair on the back of his neck stood up straight as he asked, “Who is it? Who's there?!”

He quickly pulled four axes and six machetes out of his travel pack, but that in and of itself didn't make him feel much safer, so he also produced a bit of black incense from within his robe, which



he clutched tightly in his left hand.

“Don’t come out!” he shouted, trembling. “Don’t even THINK about coming out! I’ve got axes AND machetes, and this incense can call lightning from the Heavens, and even summon Immortals! If you dare to show your face, you’re DEAD!” Finally, he turned and ran toward the mountain path, simultaneously juggling all of the various weapons in his hands. Clanking sounds could eventually be heard as axes and machetes began to fall to the ground left and right.

Perhaps whatever it was that had been rustling around in the shrubbery really did end up getting frightened by him. The sounds ceased, and no wild animal burst out of the bushes. Bai Xiaochun hurried toward the mountain, wiping the sweat from his brow. By this point, his face was pale, and he was almost considering giving up this crazy idea of climbing the mountain, but then he thought about the incense stick, which his parents had handed down to him before they died. Supposedly, it had been passed down from their ancestors, a gift bestowed by a down-and-out Immortal they had saved. Before departing, the Immortal had given it to them to pay back the kindness they had shown. Furthermore, the Immortal had even promised to take a member of the Bai Clan as a disciple. He told them that merely burning the incense stick would summon him to their side.

Bai Xiaochun had actually lit the incense stick more than ten times in the past few years, and yet, no Immortal had ever shown up. It had eventually reached the point that Bai Xiaochun was starting to suspect whether or not the story about the Immortal was even true. Finally, he’d resolved to climb the mountain. For one thing, the incense stick was almost used up, and also, there

was the matter of the flying Immortal being sighted recently.

And that was how he ended up in his current situation. His theory was that if he could get a bit closer to the Immortal, then perhaps it would be easier for that Immortal to sense the incense stick.

Standing in front of the mountain, he hesitated for a moment, then gritted his teeth and decided to keep going. Thankfully, the mountain wasn't very high, and it didn't take long to reach the peak, where he stopped, panting. He looked at the village down below, and an emotional expression appeared on his face. Then he glanced at the finger-nail sized bit of black incense. It had clearly been burned on numerous occasions, and was almost completely used up.

"It's been three years. Bless me, mom and dad. It HAS to work this time!" Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and then carefully lit the incense. A stiff breeze instantly kicked up, and in the blink of an eye, dark clouds filled the sky. Lightning crackled, and deafening thunder boomed in his ears.

The majesty of the entire scene caused Bai Xiaochun to tremble, fearful that he might be killed by the lightning. He very nearly spit on the incense to extinguish it, but managed to hold back.

"I've lit this incense twelve times in the past three years, and this is the thirteenth time. I have to let it burn! Come on, Xiaochun! The lightning won't kill you. At least probably not...." All twelve times that he had lit the incense in the past, there had been lightning and thunder, and yet no Immortal had ever appeared.

Each time, he had gotten so scared that he spit on the incense to put it out. He actually found it a bit strange that a supposedly Immortal stick of incense could be extinguished with some ordinary saliva.

Bai Xiaochun sat there shaking in fear as the thunder boomed around him. Suddenly, a streak of light appeared in the air off in the distance.

It was a middle-aged man wearing luxurious clothing. He had the demeanor of a transcendent being, yet he looked weary and travel-worn. In fact, if you looked closely, his eyes seemed to flicker with extreme exhaustion.

“Finally I can see exactly what moron has been lighting that incense stick all the time for the past three years!”

Every time the man thought about what he had experienced during the past few years, he got extremely annoyed. Three years ago, he had sensed the medicinal aura of an incense stick he had given away back when he was in the Qi Condensation stage. That immediately caused him to recall the debt he owed back in the mortal world.

The first time he flew out in response to the incense stick being lit, he had assumed it would be a simple matter of heading out and then immediately returning. He had never imagined that before even being able to find the incense, its aura would suddenly vanish, severing his connection to it. If it had happened only once, it wouldn't have been a big deal. However, over the course of three years, the aura had appeared more than ten times.

Over and over again his search was interrupted, ensuring that he was constantly leaving his sect and then going back. Back and forth, back and forth. It was torment.

As he closed in on Mount Hood, he caught sight of Bai Xiaochun. Fuming with numerous frustrations, the man landed on the mountain top and waved his hand, instantly extinguishing the sputtering incense stick.

The thunder ceased, and Bai Xiaochun stared at the man in shock.

“Are you an Immortal?” Bai Xiaochun asked cautiously. Still unsure about what exactly was going on, he slipped his hand behind his back and grabbed an axe.

“You may call me [Li Qinghou](#). Are you from the Bai Clan?” The middle-aged cultivator’s eyes shone like lightning as he measured up Bai Xiaochun, ignoring the axe behind his back. To him, Bai Xiaochun seemed delicate, almost pretty, and reminded him of his old friend from years ago. Furthermore, his latent talent seemed suitable. Li Qinghou’s anger gradually began to fade.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. Although he was still a bit scared, he sat up straight and quietly said, “Junior most definitely is from the Bai Clan. I’m Bai Xiaochun.”

“Alright, well tell me this,” Li Qinghou said, his voice cool. “Why did you light that incense so many times over the past three

years!?” He very much wanted to know the answer to this question.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the question, his mind spun as he tried to come up with a good answer. Finally, a melancholic expression appeared on his face, and he looked down toward the village at the bottom of the mountain.

“Junior is a sentimental and righteous person,” he said. “I simply couldn’t bear to part with my fellow villagers. Every time I lit the incense, I was overwhelmed with feelings of sorrow. The mere thought of leaving them behind was far too painful.”

Li Qinghou stared in shock. He had never considered such a possibility, and as such, the anger in his heart faded even more. He could tell from this young man’s words alone that he was definitely good material.

However, the next thing he did was send his divine sense down toward the village, and he heard the sounds of drums and gongs and rejoicing. He even heard the villagers talking about how glad they were that ‘the weasel’ was gone. An unsightly expression appeared on his face, and he felt a headache coming on. He looked back at the charming and pure Bai Xiaochun, who seemed like he wouldn’t hurt a fly, and suddenly realized that this kid was a villain to the core.

“Tell me the truth!” Li Qinghou said, his voice echoing like thunder. Bai Xiaochun was so frightened that he started shaking.

“Hey, you can’t blame me!” Bai Xiaochun said, sounding very miserable. “What kind of crappy incense is this anyway!? Every time I lit it, lightning would start crashing around everywhere! I almost got killed on several occasions! In fact, avoiding that lightning thirteen times was quite a feat!”

Li Qinghou looked silently at Bai Xiaochun.

“If you were so scared, then why did you light it over ten times?!” he asked.

“’Cuz I’m scared of dying!” Bai Xiaochun replied indignantly. “Isn’t the point of Immortal cultivation to be able to live forever? I want to live forever!”

Li Qinghou was once again struck speechless. However, he found the kid’s fascination with living forever laudable, and realized that his personality might change a bit after some hard training in the sect.

After a moment of thought, he waved his sleeve, sweeping Bai Xiaochun up into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

“Alright, come with me,” he said.

“Where are we going?” asked Bai Xiaochun, suddenly realizing that they were flying. “Ah, we’re so high....” The ground was very, very far down, causing the blood to drain from his face. He immediately dropped his axe and grabbed onto the Immortal’s leg.

Li Qinghou looked down at him clutching his leg. Feeling a bit at a loss, he replied, “The Spirit Stream Sect.”

Bai Xiaochun’s name in Chinese is 白小纯 *bái xiǎo chún*. Bai is a surname which also means “white.” Xiao means “little.” Chun means “pure”

The word for weasel is literally “white rat wolf,” the first character being the same character as Bai Xiaochun’s surname

Li Qinghou’s name in Chinese is 李青候 *lǐ qīng hòu*. Li is a very common surname, also the same surname as the Li Clan in ISSTH. Qing means “green, blue, black, azure, etc.” Hou means a lot of things including “time” and “wait”

## Chapter 2: The Ovens

---

Eight enormous cloud-wreathed mountains towered over the Heavenspan River. Four of those mountains were located on the north bank of the river, whereas three were on the south bank. Shockingly, one mountain, the most majestic of them all, rose up from the middle of the river itself.

The entire top half of that mountain was covered with brilliant white snow, and rose up so high that the peak of the mountain wasn't even visible. The middle of the mountain had been hollowed out, allowing the golden river water to flow right through it, and causing the mountain itself to somewhat resemble a bridge.

Currently, a beam of light was speeding along near the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect. It was none other than Li Qinghou and Bai Xiaochun. As they raced into the servants' quarters beneath the Third Peak, it was just possible to hear Bai Xiaochun shouting out in fear.

He was scared to death from all the flying. They had passed over countless mountains, and the entire time, he had felt like he was losing his grip on Li Qinghou's leg.

Eventually, everything turned into a blur. When everything finally became clear again, he realized that they had landed just outside of a building. He stood there, legs trembling, looking around at a scene that was very different from what he was used to back at the village.



Towering up in front of the building was a huge stone, upon which three characters were written in flamboyant calligraphy.

Department of Servant Affairs.

Sitting next to the stone was a pock-faced woman. As soon as she caught sight of Li Qinghou, she rose to her feet and clasped hands in greeting.

“Send this kid to the Ovens,” Li Qinghou said. Without another word, and paying no further heed to Bai Xiaochun, he then transformed into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

When the pock-faced woman heard him mention the Ovens, she stared in shock. She looked Bai Xiaochun over, then handed him a bag which contained a servant’s uniform and other items. Face expressionless, led him away from the building toward a nearby path, simultaneously explaining some of the basic sect rules and customs. The path was paved with green limestone, and wound through numerous buildings and courtyards. The fragrant aroma of plants and flowers filled the air, and the entire place seemed like a celestial paradise. As he looked around, Bai Xiaochun’s heart began to thump with excitement, and his previous nervousness and anxiety began to fade.

“This place is awesome,” he thought. “It’s way better than the village!” His eyes shone with anticipation as he followed the woman along. The scenery only continued to get more and more spectacular. He even saw some beautiful women along the way, which instantly caused his heart to surge with delight.

Soon, Bai Xiaochun got even more excited. That was because he caught sight of what appeared to be their destination; at the end of the path was a seven-story building that sparkled like crystal. There were even celestial cranes soaring in the air above it.

“Are we there yet, Elder Sister?” Bai Xiaochun asked excitedly.

“Yes,” she replied coolly, her face as expressionless as ever. She pointed to a small path off to the side. “That’s where we’re going.”

Bai Xiaochun looked in the direction she was pointing, heart bursting with anticipation. But then, his entire body went stiff, and he rubbed his eyes. He looked again, a bit more closely, and saw a gravel path lined by haphazardly-constructed thatch-roofed huts that looked like they might disintegrate at any moment. A strange aroma wafted out from the area.

Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, but no tears would come. Still clinging to a scrap of hope, he asked the pock-faced woman another question.

“Elder Sister, did you point in the wrong direction just now?”

“Nope,” she replied coolly, stepping onto the gravel path. When Bai Xiaochun heard her response, all of the beauty of the place seemed to disappear. A bitter expression appeared on his face as he continued to follow her.

Before long, he caught sight of the end of the decrepit path, where he saw [several huge black woks running around](#). After a moment, he realized that the woks were actually attached to the backs of several incredibly fat men. These men were so obese that it seemed like squeezing them would cause pure fat to ooze out. One of the men was even fatter than the others, so fat that he looked like a mountain of flesh. Bai Xiaochun was even worried that the man might explode from being so fat.

The entire area was filled with hundreds of huge cooking woks, within which fat men were boiling rice.

Sensing that someone had approached, the men looked up and saw the pock-faced woman. The fattest of the men, the one who looked like a mountain of flesh, hefted his ladle and hurried over. The ground trembled as he walked, and his fat bounced and jiggled in a way that made Bai Xiaochun stare in shock. Without even thinking about it, he began to feel around for an axe.

“The magpies were signing especially beautiful songs this morning, and now I know why,” the mountain of flesh cried out as he ran over. His eyes flickered with a lustful gleam. “It was all because you were coming, big sis. Could it be that you’ve changed your mind? You finally realized how talented I am, and want to take advantage of this auspicious day to formally become my beloved partner?”

The pock-faced woman looked at the mountain of flesh with both disgust and anger.

“I’m just here to deliver this kid to the Ovens,” she said. “Task

accomplished. I'll take my leave now!" Then she hurried off.

Bai Xiaochun gasped. He had taken the time to check out the woman on their way here, and she really looked like a freak. He couldn't help but wonder what kind of taste this fat man had. Apparently even someone with a face like hers got him all hot and bothered.

Before Bai Xiaochun could consider the matter any more, the mountain of flesh was suddenly standing in front of him, panting a bit. The man was so huge that Bai Xiaochun found himself completely covered by his shadow.

Bai Xiaochun looked up at the enormous man and his quivering rolls of flesh, and swallowed hard. This was actually his first time ever seeing someone so fat.

The mountain of flesh glanced resentfully at the pock-faced woman, who was making her way back up the gravel path, then looked back at Bai Xiaochun.

"Well well, we have a newcomer. We'd left a spot open for Xu Baocai to join, so this complicates matters."

Bai Xiaochun felt nervous just looking at the man's huge frame, and subconsciously took a few steps back. "Elder Brother, I am your humble... er, humble servant Bai Xiaochun...."

"Bai Xiaochun? Hmm.... White skin, slender and dainty. You

look pretty innocent. Excellent, excellent. Your name really fits my taste.” The mountain of flesh looked him over, then clapped Bai Xiaochun on the shoulder, which very nearly sent Bai Xiaochun flying off to the side.

“Uh, what’s your name, Elder Brother?” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and looked up thoughtfully as he prepared to make fun of the man’s name.

The mountain of flesh chuckled and slapped his chest, causing the fat to ripple back and forth. “I’m Big Fatty Zhang. That’s Second Fatty Huang, and that’s Third Fatty Hei...”

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard these incredibly stirring names, he abandoned any plans to make fun of them.

“As for you,” Big Fatty Zhang continued, “from now on, you’ll be Ninth Fatty Bai! Er.... Wait a second, Junior Brother. You’re way too skinny! If you go around looking like that, you’ll lose face for the Ovens! Well, I guess that doesn’t matter for now. Don’t worry. After a few years, you’ll get fat too. Then we’ll call you Ninth Fatty Bai.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard the nickname Ninth Fatty Bai, he grimaced.

“Well, since you’re already our Ninth Junior Brother, you don’t count as an outsider any more. Here in the Ovens, we have a long-standing tradition of carrying woks on our backs. See this wok here on my back?” He slapped the wok and continued boastfully:

“It’s the king of woks, forged from the highest quality iron and engraved with an Earth Flame spell formation. When you use this wok to cook up spirit rice, the flavor is far, far better than the rice cooked in any other wok. By the way, you’ll have to choose a wok to carry on your back, too. Then you’ll look really impressive.”

Glancing at Big Fatty Zhang’s wok, and realizing that everyone else in the Ovens was similarly adorned, Bai Xiaochun suddenly got an image of himself walking around in such a fashion.

“Elder Brother,” he blurted, “is it possible to opt out of the wok-carrying thing...?”

“Are you kidding me? Wok-carrying is an important tradition in the Ovens! Later on when you’re out in the sect, people will see the wok on your back and instantly recognize that you’re from the Ovens! Once they know that, they won’t dare to pick on you. The Ovens has a lot of influence around here, you know!” Big Fatty Zhang winked at Bai Xiaochun. Allowing no further discussion of the matter, he led Bai Xiaochun to one of the thatch-roofed huts, within which were stacks of thousands of woks, most of which were covered in layers of dust. Clearly, no one had been in here for quite some time.

“Go ahead and pick one, Ninth Junior Brother, then come on over and help tend to the rice. If the rice burns, then the Outer Sect disciples will make a scene again.” Letting out a holler, Big Fatty Zhang turned and ran back to join the other fat men as they hustled and bustled amongst the more than one hundred cooking woks.

Sighing in despair, Bai Xiaochun looked over the woks, and was agonizing over which one to pick when he suddenly noticed one particular wok off in the corner, buried under a big pile.

It was a unique wok that, instead of being circular, was shaped like an oval. It almost didn't even look like an oval, but rather, like a turtle shell. There were also some faint markings visible on its surface.

“Eee?” Bai Xiaochun's eyes brightened, and he quickly walked over and squatted down to look at the wok more closely. After dragging it out and examining it further, his eyes began to shine with satisfaction.

He had been fond of turtles ever since he was young, mostly because they represented longevity. Considering that he had come to learn about Immortal cultivation for the purposes of living forever, as soon as he saw the turtle-shell wok, he knew that it was an auspicious sign, a good omen.

After he emerged with the wok, Big Fatty Zhang caught sight of him and hurried over, ladle in hand.

“Ninth Junior Brother, why did you pick that one?” he asked sincerely, rubbing his ample belly. “That wok has been in there for years, and nobody has ever used it, mainly because it looks like a turtle shell and people don't want to put it on their backs. Umm... are you sure, Ninth Junior Brother?”

“I'm sure.” Bai Xiaochun said resolutely, looking fondly at the

wok. "This is the wok for me."

Big Fatty Zhang tried to dissuade him some more, but eventually realized that Bai Xiaochun had made up his mind. Finally, he gave him a strange look and stopped trying. After assigning him one of the Ovens' thatch-roofed huts for housing, he went back to work.

Soon, dusk had fallen. Bai Xiaochun sat in his thatch-roofed hut, examining the turtle-shaped wok. One thing that stuck out to him were the designs traced on the back of the wok, which were so faint that you wouldn't see them unless you looked closely.

He could instantly tell that this was no ordinary wok. Carefully putting it on the stove, he looked around the little hut. It was very simple. In addition to the stove, it had a bed, a desk, and an ordinary copper mirror hanging on the wall. As Bai Xiaochun had his head turned to look around, the seemingly-ordinary wok behind him suddenly emitted a flash of violet light!

As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, this had been a day packed with all sorts of momentous events. He had finally arrived in the land of his dreams, a world of Immortals. At the moment, he was still in a bit of a daze.

After a bit of time passed, he took a deep breath, and his eyes began to shine with anticipation.

"I'm gonna live forever!" As he sat there, he pulled out the bag which the pock-faced woman had given him.



Inside the bag was a medicinal pill, a wooden sword, some incense, a servant's uniform, and a command medallion. Finally, there was a bamboo scroll with several small characters written on the cover.

“Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art. Qi Condensation Manual.”

It was evening, and Big Fatty Zhang and the others in the Ovens were bustling about. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was looking at the bamboo scroll, eyes shining with anticipation. He had come here in order to learn how to live forever, and he held the key to achieving that goal in his hands right now. After taking a deep breath, he opened the scroll.

Moments later, his eyes were gleaming with excitement. The bamboo scroll had three pictures, and accompanying text that described how cultivation was divided into two stages of Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment. As far as the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, it was divided into ten levels, each of which corresponded to the ten levels of Qi Condensation.

By practicing cultivation to a given level, it was possible to exercise control over physical objects. After reaching the third level, you could control half of a small cauldron. At the sixth level, it became half of a large cauldron. At the ninth level, it was a full cauldron. As for the final full circle, you could actually control two full cauldrons.

Unfortunately, this scroll only described up to the third level of the art, with no further information about the subsequent levels. The key to the whole thing was cultivation, using a prescribed set

of breathing techniques to develop the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his mind and began to regulate his breathing. Then he closed his eyes and imitated the posture depicted in the first picture in the bamboo scroll. He was able to hold on for three breaths of time before intense pain filled him. Finally, he let out a shout and gave up. From what he could tell, using this breathing technique actually sucked all the air out of him, making it impossible to actually breathe.

“This is way too hard,” he thought. “According to the description under the picture, when you practice this kind of cultivation, you should be able to sense a strand of qi flowing through you. Just now, though, the only thing I felt was intense pain.” He was starting to get frustrated. However, for the sake of living forever, he gritted his teeth and tried again. He repeated the process over and over again until it was the middle of the night. During that entire time, he never once sensed any sort of qi in his body.

He had no way of knowing it, but even someone with exceptional latent talent who tried to cultivate the first level of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art would need at least a month to succeed, unless they had some outside help. Considering that, it was simply impossible that he could have succeeded after only a few hours.

Body aching painfully, Bai Xiaochun finally stretched, and was about to go wash his face when, all of a sudden, he heard a commotion outside. He stuck his head out of the window and immediately caught sight of a sallow-faced young man standing in the door of the main courtyard of the the Ovens. He looked angry.

“I’m Xu Baocai! Whoever it was that took my spot here, get the hell out here right now!”

This situation is pretty funny because “to carry a black wok on the back” is an expression which means “to be made a scapegoat” or “be unjustly blamed.” Here’s a little [clipart](#) I found on the Chinese internet that depicts the phrase

## Chapter 3: Six Lines Of Truth

---

The motion of Bai Xiaochun sticking his head out of the window instantly attracted the attention of the sallow-faced young man. Enraged, he yelled, “So, you’re the guy who took my spot!”

It was too late for Bai Xiaochun to duck his head back into the window. He immediately pasted an innocent expression onto his face and said, “No, it wasn’t me!”

“Liar! You’re so skinny and short, you’re obviously a newbie here!” Xu Baocai clenched his hands into fists and stared furiously at Bai Xiaochun. He was so angry that he looked like he might explode at any moment.

Feeling quite wronged, Bai Xiaochun peeped: “It really had nothing to do with me!”

“I don’t care! Three days from now on the southern slope of the sect, you and I are gonna have a fight to the death! If you win, then I’ll have no choice other than to suck it up. If you lose, then I get my spot back.” Xu Baocai shoved his hand into his robe and pulled out a Blood Notice, which he threw onto Bai Xiaochun’s window sill. The notice was covered with countless versions of the character “DIE,” all of them written in blood.

Bai Xiaochun looked down at all the “DIE” characters and couldn’t miss the killing intent roiling off of them. His heart went cold. Then he remembered that Xu Baocai had just mentioned a ‘fight to the death,’ and he gasped.

“Elder Brother, this isn’t that big a deal! Why did you have to go and use your own blood to write so many characters? Didn’t it... hurt?”

“Not a big deal?!” Xu Baocai roared, gnashing his teeth. “Hump! I’ve been living frugally for ages. I saved up spirit stones for seven years! Seven years, do you hear me?!? Only then could I afford to bribe the Honor Guard into getting me a spot in the Ovens! Then you decide to stick your foot into the door? This enmity will never be reconciled! Three days from now is the day you die!”

“I think I’ll pass,” Bai Xiaochun said, picking up the Blood Notice gingerly between his thumb and forefinger, and then tossing it out the window.

“YOU!” raged Xu Baocai. Suddenly, he felt the ground shaking, and he realized that there was a mountain of flesh standing there next to him. It was hard to say how long Big Fatty Zhang had been standing there, but there he was, off to the side, coldly measuring up Xu Baocai.

“Ninth Fatty,” he said, addressing Bai Xiaochun, “you’re on dish duty with Second Brother.” Then he looked back at Xu Baocai. “As for you, stop causing such a ruckus! Get your ass out of here!” He swept his ladle through the air threateningly, causing a gust of wind to spring up.

Xu Baocai’s face fell, and he backed up several steps. He wanted to keep arguing, but seeing the impatient look on Big Fatty Zhang’s

face, he shot a venomous look at Bai Xiaochun, then stalked off.

As Bai Xiaochun thought about it, he realized that considering the vicious look Xu Baocai had given him, he was certain to pop up again at some point. Therefore, the best thing to do in the situation would be to stay put in the Ovens. Most likely, Xu Baocai wouldn't dare to come back there and cause trouble.

Days passed. Bai Xiaochun slowly got used to working in the Ovens during the day, and cultivating the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art at night. However, progress was slow. Eventually he got to the point where he could endure for four breaths of time, but no more, leaving him very frustrated.

On one particular night in the middle of his cultivation session, he suddenly heard a big commotion among the fat Elder Brothers.

“Close the gate, close the gate! Hurry up, Second Fatty Huang, close that gate!”

“Third Fatty Hei, check and see if anyone is spying on us. Quickly!”

Bai Xiaochun blinked in shock. Having learned from his previous mistake, he avoided the window and peeked through a crack in the door. What he saw was a bunch of fatties bustling around the courtyard so fast they were almost flying.

Moments later, the main gate to the Ovens was closed tightly.

Furthermore, for some reason, a faint mist had sprung up, making the fatties look even more mysterious than ever.

Bai Xiaochun watched the scene playing out. The fatties were now hustling over to one particular thatched hut. Despite all the mist, Bai Xiaochun could clearly see Big Fatty Zhang's formidable frame, and he seemed to be speaking to the others. The whole scene was very odd, so Bai Xiaochun began to edge away from the door in an attempt to pretend he hadn't seen anything at all.

However, it was at that exact point that Big Fatty Zhang's voice echoed out: "Ninth Fatty, I know you're watching. Get out here!" Although he didn't speak very loud, his voice instantly weighed down on Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then slowly walked out the door, putting on the innocent expression of a person who wasn't capable of even hurting a fly.

As soon as he neared the group of fatties, Big Fatty Zhang grabbed him and pulled him over to stand among them. Almost immediately, Bai Xiaochun caught a whiff of some unique aroma, something that instantly caused a warm feeling to spread throughout his body.

He looked around at the others, and saw that they all had euphoric expressions on their faces. For some reason, he also felt enlivened. It was then that he noticed that Big Fatty Zhang was holding a magical mushroom in his hand. It was about the size of an infant's hand, and as translucent as crystal; all it took was a single glance, and anyone could tell that it was no ordinary item.

Big Fatty Zhang looked over at Bai Xiaochun, then held out the mushroom and gruffly said, “Come on, Ninth Junior Brother, take a bite.”

“Uhh...” replied Bai Xiaochun, eyeing the magical mushroom. Then he looked around at all the fat Elder Brothers, and hesitated. Big Fatty Zhang instantly got irritated. From the look on his face, if Bai Xiaochun didn’t eat the mushroom, the two of them would become enemies.

It wasn’t just him. Second Fatty Huang, Third Fatty Hei, and all the others were all glaring at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard. Even in his wildest dreams, he would never have imagined himself in a situation where people would flip out in anger if he didn’t take a bite of a priceless magical mushroom, as if it were nothing more than a chicken leg. And yet, that was exactly what was happening right in front of his very eyes.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was thumping as he gritted his teeth and accepted the magical mushroom. Finally, he opened his mouth and took a big bite. The mushroom instantly dissolved in his mouth, causing a wonderful sensation to fill his body, something many times more intense than what he had experienced moments before when merely smelling it. Almost instantly, his face flushed bright red.

“Excellent. Elder Sun demanded that we use this hundred-year-



old magical mushroom in a soup. If we all eat, take a bit, then we'll have to sink or swim together!" Big Fatty Zhang looked extremely content as he opened his mouth and took a nibble. Then he tossed the mushroom to the next fatty in line, and soon, all of them were munching on mushroom flesh. Now that they were all chewing together, the group smiled at Bai Xiaochun as if he were now one of them.

Bai Xiaochun chuckled as he realized that all these guys were essentially partners in crime. Furthermore, considering they had gotten so fat this way, it probably wasn't dangerous to join them. It was little wonder Xu Baocai had given him a duel challenge with the word "DIE" written on it so many times....

"Elder Brother," Bai Xiaochun said, "that magical mushroom was scrumptious! I feel like my whole body's on fire!" He licked his lips and looked impatiently at Big Fatty Zhang.

In response, Big Fatty Zhang's eyes began to shine brightly. With a hearty laugh, he flamboyantly pulled out a sealwort flower, which he handed to Bai Xiaochun.

"Now do you see how amazing the Ovens is, Junior Brother? I wasn't lying! Alright, eat up. Eat till you're stuffed!"

Bai Xiaochun's eyes began to shine as he took a big bite. Next, Big Fatty Zhang pulled out some sort of natural precious material, something that looked like a golden jewel, which emanated a fragrant aroma.

Bai Xiaochun needed no prompting from Big Fatty Zhang. He immediately took a bite and swallowed it down. The tangy flavor filled him with a wonderful sensation. After that, Big Fatty Zhang produced an incredibly sweet red spirit fruit.

More items emerged. Magical mushrooms, various medicinal ingredients, spirit fruits and other precious items. Bai Xiaochun partook of them all, as did the other fatties. He ate so much that soon, his head was spinning. He almost felt drunk, his body hot and burning to the point where white steam rose up from the top of his head. He already felt as fat as a ball.

The more he ate, the more kindly Big Fatty Zhang and the others looked at him. In the end, they slapped their stomachs and laughed heartily, and they all truly seemed like partners in crime.

Head swimming, Bai Xiaochun stretched out his arms and legs. His hand landed on Big Fatty Zhang's giant stomach, and his foot landed off to the side. He began to laugh along with the others.

“Other servant departments would kill to get one of their own into the Outer Sect. But we kill to make sure we stay out! Who wants to go there anyway? What's so good about the Outer Sect, huh?” Big Fatty Zhang sounded very proud of this. As he finished speaking, he pulled out a ginseng root. The root itself had countless faintly visible age rings, and was covered with numerous rootlets. Clearly, this ginseng root was very old.

“Ninth Junior Brother, our cultivation bases are all strong enough that we could have become Outer Sect disciples a long time ago. However, we prefer to hide our true level. Look, there are

Outer Sect disciples who would kill for the chance to get a single bite of a one-hundred-year-old ginseng root like this. Do we look scared?” Big Fatty Zhang subsequently plucked a rootlet off and popped it into his mouth, chewed, and swallowed. Then he handed the ginseng root to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was so stuffed he almost couldn't see straight. “Elder Brother, I'm full.... I really can't eat another bite–”

Before he could even finish speaking, Big Fatty Zhang plucked off a rootlet and stuffed it into his mouth.

“Ninth Junior Brother, you're far too skinny, so skinny that the girls in the sect won't like you. In our sect, they like guys like us Brothers, stalwart and plump! Come on, eat....” Big Fatty Zhang let out a huge burp. Then he picked up a stack of empty bowls, simultaneously pointing to two scrolls hanging on either side of the nearby thatched hut, upon which was written a couplet. “Look, we have a saying here that goes I'd rather starve to death in the Ovens than struggle up the ladder in the Outer Sect.”

Bai Xiaochun looked over at the couplet and said, “Yeah, for sure! We all want to starve to death here! Uh... yeah, starve to death.”

Then he slapped his stomach and let out a burp.

Hearing this, Big Fatty Zhang and the others all started laughing. They all were finding Bai Xiaochun to be increasingly charming.

“Today is a great day,” Big Fatty Zhang said. “Ninth Junior Brother, I have something important to tell you. We have certain ways of doing things here in the Oven, and to fit in, you need to memorize a certain mnemonic. Pay attention.

*Fruits and herbs of a magical nature; Nibble the edges but spare the stem; Slice the meat thin when there’s some to butcher; As for the bones leave some flesh on them; Spirit congee? Water it down until it’s thin; Fine wine? Half a cup will do you in.*

“These six lines were compiled after years of suffering by previous generations. If you go about eating following these principles, then you’re guaranteed to be safe. Alright, let’s call it a night. Head to sleep everyone, today’s midnight snack is over. The Outer Sect disciples are still waiting for their soup.” As he spoke, Big Fatty Zhang began to fill the empty bowls with rice gruel.

Bai Xiaochun’s head was spinning, and he couldn’t stop thinking about the six lines of truth he had just been told. He looked over at Big Fatty Zhang and the others filling up the bowls, let out a burp, then squatted down to examine the bowls themselves. Then, his mouth turned up into a smile.

“Elder Brothers, these bowls are too nice.”

Big Fatty Zhang and the others looked back at him with strange expressions.

Looking as charming as ever, he chuckled and said, “At first glance, they don’t look very big, but can actually hold a lot of food.

Why don't we make them look big, but hold less food? For example, we could make the bottom of the bowls... thicker!"

Big Fatty Zhang stared in shock, as though he had just been struck by lightning. His rolls of fat then began to quiver, and his eyes began to shine brightly. The other fatties began to pant, and their fat also began to tremble.

All of a sudden a loud smacking sound rang out as Big Fatty Zhang slapped his thigh. Then he threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

"Yes, yes, YES! That's an idea worth passing down! Future generations in the Ovens will all benefit from this! Ninth Junior Brother, I never imagined that someone as charming as you would actually be as crafty as this! Hahaha! You were born to be a part of the Ovens!"

## Chapter 4: Spirit Enhancement

---

Everyone was in a wonderful mood, and were extremely pleased with Bai Xiaochun. Not only was he very charming, he seemed to have lots of crafty ideas. Big Fatty Zhang decided that a reward was in order, and pressed a grain of spirit rice into Bai Xiaochun's hand.

Bai Xiaochun laughed happily as he staggered back to his room. Before he could climb in bed, all of the spiritual energy he had absorbed by eating the various precious materials suddenly burst out inside of him. His head spun, and he flopped face-first down onto the ground, where he immediately began snoring.

He slept wonderfully for the entire night. The following morning at dawn, when he opened his eyes, they shone brightly. He looked down to find that he was fatter than the day before. Furthermore, his skin was covered in a sticky layer of filth. When he hurried out to wash up, Big Fatty Zhang and the others were preparing breakfast for the sect disciples. When they saw Bai Xiaochun's bedraggled appearance, they started laughing.

“Ninth Junior Brother, all that filth comes from the impurities in your body. Once you get rid of it, it will be much easier for you to practice cultivation. Take a few days off, we won't need your help anyway. In a few days you can start working again.”

“Don't forget about that grain of spirit rice! Eat it up quickly before it goes bad.”

“Sure thing,” Bai Xiaochun replied. Feeling quite energetic, he returned to his room and grabbed the turtle-shaped wok off of the stove. After filling it with water from the washroom, he returned and put it back on the stove. Then he pulled out the grain of spirit rice to examine it. It was about the size of his thumb, crystalline in appearance, and fragrantly aromatic.

“If Immortals eat this stuff, then it must be incredible.” Sighing, he threw a few pieces of wood into the stove, then lit the fire. He was immediately hit by a blast of heat, which caused him to back up, blinking anxiously. Then he looked down at the fire and clicked his tongue.

“That’s no ordinary fire. It lights faster and also burns a lot hotter than the fire in the village.” Taking another look at the burning logs in the fire, he realized that they were not ordinary pieces of wood.

About this time, the fire began to burn even hotter than before, and Bai Xiaochun watched in amazement as one of the designs etched into the back of the turtle shell wok begin to light up, starting at what appeared to be the tail of the turtle shell and ending where the head would be. Soon, the entire design was shining brightly.

Bai Xiaochun stared in amazement, then slapped his thigh.

“I knew it! This is some sort of treasure! It’s definitely way better than Eldest Brother’s wok!” More certain than ever that this wok was something extraordinary, Bai Xiaochun quickly tossed the grain of spirit rice into the water.

Then he sat off to the side with the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art bamboo scroll. Emulating the movements and breathing techniques depicted in the first picture, he began to cultivate.

He had only just begun when, suddenly, his eyes went wide; the posture which had been so difficult to maintain just the day before, was now much easier to assume. In fact, he actually felt very comfortable, without the slightest sensation of awkwardness. In addition, the breathing technique no longer left him feeling as if he were suffocating. Instead, he felt a very pleasant sensation.

Furthermore, he was absolutely certain that before today he could only maintain the posture for about three or four breaths of time, but this time, after seven or eight breaths, he didn't feel the least bit of pain or discomfort.

Suppressing his excitement, Bai Xiaochun calmly continued until thirty breaths of time had passed. Just when he was finally starting to feel weak and uncomfortable, a strand of qi suddenly appeared inside of him. It was very cold, and swirled around rapidly, and before it could make a full circle through his body, it vanished. However, Bai Xiaochun was so excited he leapt to his feet.

“Qi! Hahaha! Finally some qi appeared!” Bursting with excitement, he began to pace back and forth in his room. He quickly came to the conclusion that it must have something to do with all the precious materials he had consumed the previous night. Suddenly he wished he had eaten more.



“No wonder Elder Brother Zhang would rather starve to death in the Ovens than go climb the ladder in the Outer Sect. Not even the Outer Sect disciples would have opportunities like this.” Sitting down anxiously, he once again began to practice cultivation.

This time, he was able to maintain the posture and breathing for a full sixty breaths of time. At that point, a flow of qi appeared in him, almost a trickle, that rapidly circulated through his body.

Having experienced this once before, he was ready, and began to guide the qi through a specific path, as indicated by the first picture in the bamboo scroll.

Soon, the qi was flowing through him in just the way he wanted. He maintained the posture and movements indicated in the first illustration, and as he did, he could sense streams of coldness emerging from various parts of his body, almost like drops of water, which merged into the qi flow, causing it to grow larger and larger.

In the end, it was like a tiny stream, flowing in a continuous cycle. A tremor ran through him, and it was as if a layer of fog had suddenly been stripped away from his mind. A rumbling sound echoed out from his body.

He suddenly felt lighter and more agile than before. At the same time, globules of filth were expelled from the pores all over his body.

Unlike last time, the stream of qi inside of him didn't vanish, but

instead, remained there, circulating through his body. Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, and they shone even more brightly than before. His mind even seemed to move a bit quicker and his body felt lighter and faster.

“A permanent qi vessel,” he thought excitedly. “That’s the sign that I’ve successfully cultivated the first level of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art! It also means that I’ve reached that–what’s it called–first level of Qi Condensation!” Bai Xiaochun was overjoyed, and immediately ran to the washroom.

When Big Fatty Zhang and the others saw him, they exchanged knowing glances. Although they were a bit surprised that Bai Xiaochun had reached the first level so quickly, they all knew why it had happened.

After returning to his room, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and then began to study the bamboo scroll more thoroughly.

“After cultivating the first level of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, I should be able to manipulate physical objects. Wow, this is basically an Immortal magical technique. I should be able to shoot things through the air.” Eyes shining, he followed the instructions prescribed in the scroll, moving both hands together in a special way to perform an incantation. Then, he waved his finger at the nearby desk. Instantly, the stream inside of him surged like a bucking bronco, racing toward his right index finger and then out through the tip of his finger.

It turned into something like an invisible thread, which then attached itself to the nearby desk. However, almost as soon as it

reached the desk, the connection grew unstable, and the thread disintegrated.

Bai Xiaochun's face went pale. After a moment of recuperation, he reviewed what he had just done, then decided to give up on moving the desk. Instead, he pulled out the wooden sword from his bag and placed it on top of the desk. He wasn't sure what type of wood the sword was made from, but despite being much lighter than the desk, it still seemed unusually heavy. He waved his finger toward it, and the wooden sword twitched, then slowly floated an inch up into the air before falling back down onto the desk.

Bai Xiaochun was anything but discouraged. After a few more excited attempts, he was able to get the sword to rise higher and higher. Soon it was ten inches, then twenty, then thirty.... By the time dusk fell, he could get the wooden sword to fly in a straight line. Although it wasn't very fast, and he couldn't quite make it turn, it wouldn't fall down as easily as it had when he first started practicing.

"Henceforth, I, Bai Xiaochun, am an Immortal!" He rose proudly to his feet, held his left hand behind his back, and then waved his right hand, causing the wooden sword to flying unsteadily back and forth in his room.

Eventually, his qi began to grow unstable, so he put the wooden sword away and continued to practice cultivation. Later, he caught wind of a fragrant aroma coming from the wok, causing him to raise his head and take a deep sniff. Suddenly feeling ravenous, he realized that he had been busy cultivating all day, and had completely forgotten about the spirit rice boiling in the wok. He

immediately walked over and lifted the lid to look inside.

The moment he did, the strong, fragrant aroma of spirit rice wafted out. Furthermore, at some point during the process, a brilliant, glowing silver design had appeared on the surface of the rice!

The design was clearly visible, and when Bai Xiaochun looked at it closely, he suddenly felt lost within the light. After a while, though, the design began to fade. He narrowed his eyes, and after some more thought, picked up the grain of spirit rice and held it in his hand for a closer look.

“That design looks really familiar....” His eyes flickered with a thoughtful gleam. He ducked his head to look under the stove, and saw that the fire had long since burned out. The pieces of wood were nothing more than ash now, and the design on the wok had once again faded into obscurity.

However, he could still tell that the silver design on the grain of rice was the same design as the one on the back of the wok.

He decided not to continue to investigate the design, and to be safe, chose not to eat the rice for the time being. Instead, he put it into his bag, sat there for a moment in contemplation, then left his hut to help Big Fatty Zhang and the rest.

Before long, half a month had passed. Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation progress had once again slowed down. However, after some discreet inquiries, he learned that silver designs never appeared on

spirit rice when it was cooked.

His curiosity had definitely been piqued. The more he learned about it, the more it seemed that there was something special about this particular grain of rice, not to mention his wok, which seemed even stranger. A few days later, Third Fatty Hei left the Ovens to go purchase supplies, giving Bai Xiaochun the perfect opportunity to sneak into the Four Seas Room, a place where servants could get general information about cultivation.

On his way back to his hut, he did his best to conceal the excitement which filled his heart. After closing the door behind him, he immediately took out the grain of spirit rice and studied the silver design. Gradually, an expression of disbelief appeared on his face.

“When Immortals practice cultivation, there are three skills they can’t do without. The first is alchemy, the second is equipment forging, and the third is spirit enhancement!” Bai Xiaochun thought back to the images he had dug up when searching through the ancient records in the Four Seas Room. One of them had closely resembled the silver design that was now visible on the grain of rice.

“Spirit enhancement!” After a moment, he took a long, deep breath.

Spirit enhancement was a special technique in which the energy of Heaven and Earth was forced into physical objects. It was a type of magic that essentially replaced the natural functions of Heaven and Earth, a technique which could be used on medicinal pills,

incense, or magical items. Unfortunately, it was forbidden by Heaven and Earth, ensuring that the rate of success was limited. A success would lead to the item being vastly more powerful. A failure would result in the the energy of Heaven and Earth rendering the item completely useless.

The most shocking thing about spirit enhancement was that it could be performed over and over again. Every success increased the effects of the spirit enhancement by tenfold, leading to Heaven-shaking, Earth-toppling transformations.

Of course, the more precious the item was to begin with, the more terrifying the results of success would be.

Unsurprisingly, the chances of success decreased with each enhancement. In fact, after a certain point, even some spirit enhancement Grandmasters wouldn't dare to go any further. After all, the ramifications of a failure in that case would be difficult to accept.

“The ancient records said that the Spirit Stream Sect's guardian treasure is an item that was somehow enhanced ten times by spirit enhancement. The Heavenhorn Sword!” Bai Xiaochun's throat felt dry. Eyes shining with disbelief and confusion, he swallowed and looked over at the turtle-shaped wok. There were ten faint decorative lines on the back of it, and when he looked at them, his heart began to beat so hard it felt like it was about to burst out of his chest.

As of this moment, he was sure that the design which had appeared on the spirit rice was a mark of spirit enhancement.

Furthermore, the source of that design was none other than his wok!

After a moment of hesitation, he gritted his teeth. If he didn't get to the bottom of this mystery, he wouldn't be able to sleep. He knew for a fact that this wok was something extraordinary, and therefore, he couldn't let anyone in on his secret.

He waited until it was late in the night, then very quietly tip-toed over to the wok. After taking a deep breath and trying not to think about what would happen if he failed, he pulled out his wooden sword and threw it inside, the same way he had thrown the grain of rice in.

## Chapter 5: What Happens If I Lose My Poor Little Life?

---

After waiting for what seemed like forever, nothing unusual happened. Bai Xiaochun looked thoughtfully at the patterns on the turtle-wok, and then looked down into the stove itself. Nothing remained of the wood but ash so he left, to return a few minutes later with some more firewood.

Firewood for personal use wasn't very common in the Ovens, so he'd been forced to go find Big Fatty Zhang to make a special request for some more.

After kindling the fire, Bai Xiaochun once again focused on the first design on the turtle-wok. As the wood burned, the design lit up. Bai Xiaochun's heart began to thump with excitement, and then suddenly, the wooden sword began to shine with blinding silver light.

He backed up a few paces, after which the light slowly faded away, and a piercing sensation began to emanate out from inside the wok.

He took a deep breath and carefully sidled up to the wok. The wooden sword, just like the grain of spirit rice, now had a bright silver design on it, which gradually faded to a deep silver color!

The sword appeared different than before. Although it was still made of wood, it now seemed more like it was made from metal. Bai Xiaochun's eyes lit up as he carefully took the sword out of the



wok. It felt heavier, and also emanated a certain coldness.

“It worked! My first spirit enhancement on the wooden sword worked!” Bai Xiaochun fondled the sword ecstatically, then glanced over at the wok and tried to decide what to do with it. In the end, he decided to just leave it where it was. The more he treated it like an ordinary item, the less likely it was that anyone would pay attention to it.

As for the spirit rice, he decided to eat it bit by bit over time. He would also be careful to not let anyone see the wooden sword. As an added measure, he came up with the idea of somehow painting over the glowing design.

Finally, he tidied his room, then walked out nonchalantly, as if nothing unusual had occurred. Over the next few days, he collected some various liquid materials from the Ovens which he used to paint the sword, making it bright and colorful, albeit somewhat unsightly. The most important thing was that the spirit design was covered up well enough that it wasn't obvious. In the end, Bai Xiaochun nodded his head in satisfaction.

As the days passed, Bai Xiaochun became as comfortable with life in the Ovens as a fish in water. He quickly fit in with the other Elder Brothers, and also became familiar with the work that went on there. He soon found that different types of fire were necessary for cooking different spirit foods. In fact, the different types of fire were described in terms of color; there were one-colored flames, two-colored flames, and so on. The wood he had used earlier to heat the turtle-wok had been one-colored firewood.

Big Fatty Zhang began to grow especially fond of Bai Xiaochun, and took special care of him. Furthermore, just as he'd said, after a few months passed, Bai Xiaochun was starting to gain weight.

He was no longer the scrawny kid he had been when he had first joined the sect. He was fatter, but at the same time, his skin was also fairer and clearer than before. He also looked more harmless than ever, and was clearly reaching the point of being deserving of the title Ninth Fatty Bai.

He also experienced the special snack-time arrangement on more than one occasion. However, what Bai Xiaochun found especially frustrating was that, despite gaining weight, his cultivation seemed to progress as slowly as ever. Eventually, he stopped worrying about that and spent most of his time eating and drinking with his Elder Brothers. Life was good. As the months passed, he heard bits of gossip about recent events in the Spirit Stream Sect.

In addition, Big Fatty Zhang taught him more about the sect in general. He learned that the sect disciples were divided into the Inner and Outer Sects. Any servant who could practice cultivation all the way to the third level of Qi Condensation would be able to challenge one of the trials by fire, which were paths that existed on the various mountain peaks in the sect. A servant who passed the trial by fire could join that mountain peak as an Outer Sect disciple. Only by becoming an Outer Sect disciple could anyone truly become a part of the Spirit Stream Sect.

However, accomplishing such a feat would count as a stunning accomplishment, and would be equivalent to the old saying about

[the fish leaping over the dragon gate](#). Only the top three competitors in the monthly trials by fire would be accepted, meaning that the number of people who could become an Outer Sect disciple was limited.

On one particular day, Seventh Fatty had been scheduled to go out and purchase supplies, but ended up being busy with some other matters. As a result, Big Fatty Zhang called for Bai Xiaochun and told him to stand in for Seventh Fatty. Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, recalling the incident with Xu Baocai from a few months before. Although it probably wasn't anything to worry about, he couldn't shake his anxiety. Before leaving, he went back to his room and collected eight [meat cleavers](#) and also donned six long leather coats. By the time he was finished getting dressed, he looked like a round ball.

However, he also felt much safer, which was the important thing. The last thing he did was strap his wok onto his back, leaving him feeling very safe. He then staggered out of the Ovens and down the mountain.

As he walked along the green limestone paths in the sect, he gazed around at the beautiful buildings and courtyards, and began to feel prouder than ever.

“How time flies!” he mused, clasping his hands behind his back. “Life is like a dream. I, Bai Xiaochun, have only spent a few months practicing cultivation. However, as I think back to the mortal world, and my life in the village, it fills my eyes with tears.” He walked along with eight meat cleavers hanging from his belt, a wok on his back, and multiple layers of clothing, looking very

much like a dilapidated toy ball. Occasionally, he would encounter other servants, who would stare at him out of the corners of their eyes as he passed.

There were even a few female disciples who couldn't help but laugh out loud when they saw him. They covered their mouths with their hands, and the sound of their laughter was like silver bells, clear and melodious.

Face slightly flushed, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but feel even more impressive than ever. Clearing his throat, he stuck his chest out and continued to saunter along.

Before too much time had passed, and before he had even left the Third Peak's servants' district, he noticed that quite a few servants were rushing off into the distance, looking very excited. They appeared to be heading in the direction of the path that led up to the top of the Third Peak, a place where Outer Sect disciples often congregated.

More and more servants began running over in that direction, looking very excited. Surprised by the scene, Bai Xiaochun quickly grabbed a scrawny servant who happened to be running by.

“Junior Brother, what's going on?” Bai Xiaochun asked quizzically. “Why is everyone running over there?”

The young man looked over angrily, but then saw the black wok on Bai Xiaochun's back, and his expression turned envious.

“I didn’t realize you were from the Ovens, Elder Brother. Why don’t you come along? Two Chosen from the Outer Sect, Zhou Hong and Zhang Yide, are fighting it out in the trial by fire arena. Supposedly, the two of them have a beef with each other. Whatever happens, they’re both at the sixth level of Qi Condensation, so we should be able to learn a bit by watching them, and maybe even gain some enlightenment.” Finishing his explanation, the young man hurried off, apparently worried about missing out on any of the action.

Feeling very curious, Bai Xiaochun set off in a hurry, following the flow of people as they left the servants’ district and headed to the foot of the Third Peak, where a large raised platform could be seen.

The platform was about 3,000 meters wide, and was surrounded by a crowd of servants. There were even people watching from positions further up on the mountain, all of whom wore resplendent clothing, and were clearly Outer Sect disciples.

Two young men occupied the platform, both of whom wore extravagant outfits. One of them had a scar running down his face, the other had skin as white as jade. The two of them were fighting back and forth, causing booming sounds to echo out.

The glow of magical items surrounded both of them. Floating in front of the scar-faced youth was a small flag that fluttered of its own volition, as if some invisible hand were waving it. The swirling flag formed the shape of a Mist Tiger, which let out deafening roars.

The jade-faced youth danced back and forth as he fought. He had a small blue sword which whistled through the air, leaving behind streaks of light.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the sword flying about, he gasped. Although he could control his own wooden sword in a similar way, it would be impossible to even compare his level of skill with that of the jade-faced young man.

What was even more remarkable was how the two young men didn't seem to be holding anything back. Killing intent roiled off of them, and within a short time, numerous deadly situations arose. Both were heavily wounded, and despite the fact that the wounds weren't critical, it was still a shocking sight.

This was Bai Xiaochun's first time seeing cultivators fighting, and it was very different from how he had imagined Immortals would look when they fought. The cruel and vicious way they attacked each other left his heart pounding in fear.

"Immortal cultivation... isn't just about living forever? What's all this fighting and killing all about? What happens if I end up losing my poor little life...?" Bai Xiaochun swallowed nervously as he watched the scar-faced youth's Mist Tiger lunging voraciously at the other young man. Wiping the sweat from his brow, Bai Xiaochun suddenly realized that the outside world was a very dangerous place; it was probably a much better idea to stay back in the Ovens where it was safe.

Having reached this conclusion, he began to hurry off when, all of a sudden, he heard someone shouting his name.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

He turned his head and saw the author of the Blood Notice, Xu Baocai, hurrying in his direction, a vicious expression on his face. A wooden sword floated next to him, glittering with an unusual light that clearly surpassed the first level of Qi Condensation. As the sword flew along, it left a streak of light in its wake, and sent a formidable spirit pressure emanating out.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that wooden sword heading in his direction, his eyes went wide, and an intense sense of deadly crisis welled up in him.

“He’s gonna kill me!” he thought.

Instantly, he began to run in the opposite direction, screaming: “Murder! Murder!”

The other servants in the area all heard, and looked over in shock. The cries were so loud that even Zhou Hong and Zhang Yide stopped fighting.

In fact, even Xu Baocai was unnerved by the screams. He had obviously just yelled Bai Xiaochun’s name and then started to chase him. His sword hadn’t even touched Bai Xiaochun, and yet Bai Xiaochun was screaming as though he had been stabbed repeatedly.

Xu Baocai hated Bai Xiaochun so much his gums itched. Face ashen, he ran after him, shouting: “Come on, Bai Xiaochun, you know how to fight! What are you running away for!?”

“If I knew how to fight, why would I be running away, you moron!? I would have killed you a long time ago! Murder! Murder!” Bai Xiaochun’s screams grew even louder as he fled in the opposite direction like a fat little bunny.

Meanwhile, in a building which jutted out into the air at the very peak of the mountain, two men were in the middle of playing a game of Go. One was middle-aged, the other was an old man. The middle-aged man was none other than Li Qinghou. As for the old man, he had a full head of white hair, and a ruddy complexion. His eyes glittered brightly, and he was clearly no ordinary individual. Currently, he was looking down at the scene playing out down below.

Chuckling, he said, “What an interesting child you brought back to the sect, Qinghou.”

“How embarrassing, Sect Leader. The kid’s personality definitely needs a lot more work.” Feeling a headache coming on, Li Qinghou placed his game piece onto the board and then shook his head.

“The kids in the Ovens are pretty stuck up, and yet this kid fits right in,” scoffed the old man, stroking his beard. “Not an easy task. Hmm...”

Quick note about the meat cleavers. In Chinese the word is



literally “[vegetable knife](#),” and could more properly be translated as “kitchen knife.” However, the most common kitchen knife that you find in most Chinese households is what we would call a cleaver in English. However, in both home kitchens and restaurant kitchens in China, [cleavers are used for everything](#) from cutting big chunks of meat to juliennening vegetables.

## Chapter 6: Drunk On Spiritual Energy

---

The sound of Bai Xiaochun's screams undulated through the air beneath the Third Peak, catching the astonished attention of numerous servants. All of them could clearly see Bai Xiaochun, black wok on his back, wearing several layers of clothing, running at breakneck speed through the servants' district. He looked like a fat, round ball.

From a distance, it was difficult to actually make out Bai Xiaochun himself, but you would definitely see the black wok, which made him look almost like a beetle as he flew along.

Then there were the eight meat cleavers that hung from his belt, which clashed and clanked as he fled.

"Murder!" he hollered as he ran, picking up speed. "Someone save me! I don't want to die...."

Xu Baocai was hot on his tail, face ashen, eyes gleaming ferociously and heart filled with both anxiety and rage.

Chasing Bai Xiaochun this way was catching quite a bit of attention from the servants, and Xu Baocai was worried that the Honor Guard might notice. The nervousness in his heart continued to grow.

"Quit screeching, dammit!" Xu Baocai raged. "Quiet down! What are you screaming for? Shut UP!" Gritting his teeth, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing the wooden sword to

flicker with light and then shoot toward the fleeing Bai Xiaochun.

A clang rang out as the wooden sword slammed into Bai Xiaochun's black wok. As the noise echoed out, Bai Xiaochun continued running as if nothing had happened.

Xu Baocai gnashed his teeth. The big wok on Bai Xiaochun's back covered nearly half of his body, making it very difficult to hit him. However, feeling that he had little other choice, Xu Baocai continued to give chase.

And so they raced through the servants' district, Bai Xiaochun leading the way, Xu Baocai running behind him.

"This guy is pretty fast, even with that wok on his back!" thought Xu Baocai, huffing and puffing as he fell further behind in the chase. His cultivation base was at the second level of Qi Condensation, and he was running as hard as he could. However, Bai Xiaochun was running with the passion of a rabbit whose tail had been stepped on. No matter what Xu Baocai did, he couldn't catch up.

More horrifying was that he was starting to get tired, and yet hadn't even laid a finger on his opponent. In contrast, Bai Xiaochun didn't seem to be the least bit tired at all, and was also scream like a pig at the slaughterhouse.

Soon, Bai Xiaochun caught sight of the little path leading to the Ovens, and his eyes glittered with excitement. He suddenly felt as though he were arriving home, and the sensation was so moving

that he almost cried.

“Elder Brother, save me!” he cried. “He’s trying to murder me!” A trail of dust rose into the air behind him as he ran toward the Ovens at breakneck speed. Big Fatty Zhang and the others heard his screaming and hurried out, shocked expressions on their faces.

“Elder Brother, save me! Xu Baocai is trying to kill me! My poor little life is on the line!” Bai Xiaochun quickly scrambled behind Big Fatty Zhang.

Big Fatty Zhang’s eyes gleamed with a ferocious light as he looked around vigilantly, but he saw no one.

“Xu Baocai?” he asked. It was at this point that Xu Baocai finally appeared, huffing and puffing as he ran down the path toward the Ovens.

When Bai Xiaochun realized how far behind Xu Baocai was, a quizzical expression appeared on his face.

“Eee? Why is he running so slow?”

Big Fatty Zhang looked at Bai Xiaochun, and then back at the panting Xu Baocai. The motion caused the fat on his face to quiver a bit.

Xu Baocai had expended a lot of effort in the chase, so as he neared the Ovens and then heard what Bai Xiaochun said, he was

filled with so much rage that he felt like he was about to explode. With a roar, he waved his right hand, sending his wooden sword stabbing toward a nearby tree.

A bang could be heard, and the tree quivered as the sword pierced through it, leaving behind a gaping hole.

“Bai Xiaochun,” he cried, “our differences are irreconcilable!” His eyes were completely bloodshot as he glared at Bai Xiaochun, and then the hulking Big Fatty Zhang. Finally, he turned angrily and began to stalk off back down the path.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding as he looked at the hole in the tree. Then he looked back at the fuming Xu Baocai, and swallowed hard as an uneasy feeling rose up in his heart.

Big Fatty Zhang looked at Xu Baocai’s retreating figure, and his eyes flickered with a sinister gleam. Then he patted Bai Xiaochun on the shoulder.

“Don’t worry, Ninth Junior Brother. Xu Baocai might have some good connections in the sect, but if he dares show his face here again, we Elder Brothers will cut off one of his legs!” Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, though, his tone changed. “Although, it would probably be best if you didn’t leave the Ovens, Ninth Junior Brother. You’re looking a bit skinny, I think I should fatten you up a bit. After all, Elder Zhou is celebrating his decade-birthday in a few days.”

Bai Xiaochun nodded his head absentmindedly as he stared at the

hole Xu Baocai's wooden sword had left in the tree.

He then followed his Elder Brothers back into the Ovens. Later, he sat in his room, brooding and feeling more uneasy than ever. The fact that his opponent could send a wooden sword through a tree meant that if it had hit him, he would definitely be a corpse now.

“This isn't gonna work, not unless I plan on staying inside the Ovens for the rest of my life. What if he catches me next time I go out...?” Bai Xiaochun just couldn't stop thinking about the venomous look Xu Baocai had cast his way before leaving.

“I came here to live forever, not to die....” The feeling of insecurity and anxiety caused Bai Xiaochun's eyes to slowly become shot with blood. After a long moment passed, he gritted his teeth.

“Fudge! I'm gonna do it! I'm gonna go all-out! I'm gonna go so all-out that I'll terrify myself, let alone everyone else!” His eyes were now completely bloodshot. Instead of saying that Bai Xiaochun was the type of person who was afraid of dying, it would be more accurate to say that he was simply insecure. The ordeal he had just gone through had only served to stoke his determination.

“I'm gonna practice cultivation! I'm gonna get stronger!!” Bai Xiaochun's breath came in ragged pants as he made his decision. He pulled out the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art bamboo scroll, opened it up to the second illustration, and then immediately began to practice cultivation.

He might be afraid of dying, but he was also viciously persistent. Were he not, he would never have been able to light that stick of incense thirteen times throughout the years, despite the threat of the lightning.

Grinning with vicious determination, he assumed the posture in the second illustration, tenaciously maintaining the pose. Before, he had only been able to last for about ten breaths of time, but this time, he actually lasted for fifteen.

He ended up wracked with pain, forehead dripping with great drops of sweat. However, the vicious gleam in his eye didn't fade. Soon, he was able to last for twenty breaths of time, then thirty. The small stream that was the qi vessel in his body was now ten percent complete. Gasping for breath, vision fading to black, he finally rested for a moment, then started cultivating again.

The night passed relatively uneventfully. Soon it was the next day. And the day after that. And yet another day.... Eventually fifteen days went by. Other than eating and visiting the restroom, Bai Xiaochun never left his room. To someone who had just begun the practice of cultivation, such tediousness was usually difficult to endure. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't even come close to giving up.

Big Fatty Zhang and the others were shocked by his relentless practice of cultivation. It must be stated that cultivating the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art was no easy task. In principle, it was relatively simple. However, the postures that had to be maintained to reach the various levels all led to unimaginable pain, and

therefore required incredible perseverance. Normally speaking, the servants in the sect would give up after only a few days of trying to cultivate it.

Therefore, when Big Fatty Zhang and the others saw Bai Xiaochun continue to cultivate it for more than half a month, they felt like they were observing an entirely different person than the one they had met a few months ago.

His clothes grew wrinkled, his hair became disheveled, his eyes were completely bloodshot. He seemed completely bedraggled, and at the same time, completely focused. Regardless of the pain he felt, he never gave up.

Another thing that happened was that he began to lose some of the fat he had built up. At the same time, the spirit pressure he radiated increased by more than fifty percent. He was now very close to the great circle of the first level of Qi Condensation.

Apparently, all of the precious materials he had eaten had built up in his fat. By practicing cultivation in the way he was, it was forcing those items to materialize as part of his cultivation base. It also ended up making his body tougher than the average person.

“Ninth Junior Brother, why don’t you take a break? You’ve been practicing cultivation nonstop for more than half a month.” Big Fatty Zhang and the others tried to persuade him to stop. However, when he looked up at them, they saw a gleam of determination in his eyes that left them shaken.



Time passed. Soon, Bai Xiaochun had been practicing cultivation like mad for a full month. Big Fatty Zhang and the others were shocked. In fact, Big Fatty Zhang even said, “he’s not cultivating, he’s killing himself!”

By this point in his cultivation, Bai Xiaochun could hold the pose in the second illustration for longer than 100 breaths of time. Soon, he reached 150 breaths of time. The spiritual energy inside of him was not a small stream any more. It was far, far larger than that.

Another month passed. Big Fatty Zhang and the others trembled in fear, worried that Bai Xiaochun really was killing himself from working too hard. Even as they were working up a plan to go get rid of Xu Baocai, a huge rumbling could be heard coming from Bai Xiaochun’s hut.

As the sound echoed about, the spirit pressure of the second level of Qi Condensation erupted out from the hut, spreading for dozens of meters in all directions. As soon as Big Fatty Zhang and the others sensed it, they looked up with expressions of shock.

“Little Junior Brother has broken through!”

“The second level of Qi Condensation! He hasn’t even partaken of the Ovens’ snack arrangement for more than half a year, and he’s already reached the second level of Qi Condensation! That’s pretty rare!”

“It took me a whole year to reach the second level of Qi

Condensation....” Even as they were making exclamations of shock, a crash could be heard as Bai Xiaochun’s door opened, and he burst out, looking exhausted and disheveled. However, his eyes were glittering brightly.

Big Fatty Zhang and the others were just about to hurry over to offer congratulations when Bai Xiaochun flashed through the air and nimbly landed on the bamboo fence that surrounded the Ovens. He clasped his hands behind his back and tilted his head up proudly, looking off into the distance with a profound gleam in his eyes. He looked every bit like a proud, lonesome hero.

Big Fatty Zhang and the others exchanged dismayed glances.

“What is he standing there for? He looks so weird....”

“Did little Junior Brother... get possessed or something?”

Almost as soon as they looked over at Bai Xiaochun and his odd appearance, they heard his voice echoing out, sounding proud and wise.

“Xu Baocai is a consummate Chosen among the servants of the Spirit Stream Sect, matchlessly vicious, and famous far and wide. His cultivation base is even in the terrifying second level of Qi Condensation. However, my cultivation base is also in the second level of Qi Condensation. A fight between us will be an even match. It will likely be a fight talked about in all the lands, a battle that will shake the entire sect. However, it must be fought, no matter how much blood and gore flows, no matter how many

bones are shattered and tendons... wait a second. No, this battle is far, far too important. I have to keep practicing cultivation!”

Having finished speaking, Bai Xiaochun looked around for a moment, then flicked his sleeve and returned to his room. The door slammed shut behind him as he began another session of secluded meditation. Big Fatty Zhang and the others swallowed hard, and exchanged glances. Finally, Third Fatty Hei said, “Don’t tell me we gave Junior Brother some spoiled food?”

Second Fatty Huang shivered and replied, “Oh no! This is bad! Junior Brother is drunk on spiritual energy! He’s gone crazy from cultivation.... We mustn’t provoke him now!”

## Chapter 7: Bonding The Turtle-Wok

---

In the following days, Big Fatty Zhang and the others kept a constant eye out on Bai Xiaochun's thatched hut. As for Bai Xiaochun, breaking through to the second level of Qi Condensation gave him quite a boost in self-confidence, and he continued to focus on cultivation.

Currently, he was in his room, wiping the sweat from his brow. He was buck naked, gritting his teeth against the pain as he tried to maintain the posture of the third image in the bamboo scroll.

His qi vessel was no longer a flowing stream, but rather, a small river. It flowed through his body, and with every rotation, cracking sounds would emanate out from inside of him. His previously rotund body was now thin once again, and in fact, he was even thinner than when he had first arrived in the Ovens.

However, there seemed to be energy building up in his body. As he continued to practice cultivation, the flesh and muscle that covered his skinny frame pulsed with power. In fact, if you listened carefully, you would even be able to hear the sound of his heartbeat echoing about in his room.

More and more spirit pressure was condensing inside of him, filling Bai Xiaochun with a feeling of increasing power. After several more days passed, the pain increased to point where it was simply too much, and he had to give up.

He was left panting, eyes completely bloodshot. He had the

strong feeling that he simply couldn't continue on this way. Although he naturally absorbed the spiritual power of Heaven and Earth while cultivating, that flow simply couldn't keep up with how much power he was wasting. Furthermore, the Ovens' snack arrangement wasn't a regular occurrence, and only happened on lucky occasions.

Most other people cultivated the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art by practicing it once every few days. Even people who were more devoted would only practice it once per day. In contrast, Bai Xiaochun had been practicing nonstop. It was no small wonder that Big Fatty Zhang and the others were shocked. In fact, many Inner Sect disciples would have been astonished to hear about what he was doing.

However, having reached this level of cultivation still left Bai Xiaochun feeling insecure and uneasy. After all, he was the type of person who would rather be safe than sorry. Finally, he pulled out the grain of spirit rice that he had enhanced and looked at it for a long moment before using an ordinary wok to cook it up. After the spiritual energy began to waft out of it, he quickly gobbled it down.

As soon as the spirit rice entered his mouth, it turned into a thick blast of spiritual energy that was exponentially more powerful than ordinary spirit rice. In fact, the two types couldn't even be considered to be on the same level. As the rumbling sounds echoed out inside of him, he began to practice cultivation. He instantly assumed the posture in the third illustration, and at the same time, began to regulate his breathing.

Half a month later, deep in the night, a tremor ran through Bai

Xiaochun, and he opened his eyes. He suddenly realized that at some indeterminable point, he had actually broken through from the second level of Qi Condensation to the third level.

This development caused him to go wild with joy. Excitement filled his eyes, and he began to laugh uproariously. Examining himself, he realized that the qi vessel inside of him had thoroughly transformed into a small river.

The small river circulated through his body at high speed, moving far, far faster than it had before. In fact, he could even send the spiritual energy around to different parts of his body, all with a simple thought.

“The third level of Qi Condensation! That spirit enhancement was incredible!” He rose to his feet, licking his lips at the thought of producing another spirit-enhanced grain of spirit rice. However, it was at this point that he remembered something the bamboo scroll had mentioned about the growth of internal meridians. Right now, he needed to let his body adapt to the expanded meridians, and temporarily couldn’t continue to practice cultivation.

Putting his idea about the spirit rice on the back burner, he walked out of his room, all the while looking extremely proud of himself. However, almost as soon as he set foot out the door, he caught sight of the little path outside of the Ovens, and the tree with the hole in it. Although it was late at night, the tree was clearly visible in the moonlight.

“This won’t do. Xu Baocai’s wooden sword is obviously beyond

ordinary. Even being in the third level of Qi Condensation won't guarantee my safety!" Frowning, he stood there in thought for a moment before taking out his own multi-colored wooden sword. Then he looked back at the wok inside his room.

"I think I'll feel a bit more confident if I do a second spirit enhancement," he thought. Without any further hesitation, he retrieved some of the Ovens' spirit wood.

After getting fully prepared, he stood in front of his mysterious wok and kindled the fire. Once the design on the wok lit up, he tossed the wooden sword inside.

However, after waiting for quite some time, there didn't seem to be any reaction. Bai Xiaochun frowned and looked at the design on the turtle-wok, then glanced down and realized that the fire had already burned out. Nothing but ash remained of the wood. Muttering to himself, he went out to find some more spirit wood. However, after burning several more batches, he didn't see any difference in the wooden sword.

"These pieces of firewood are all for one-colored flames," he thought. "Maybe that's just not hot enough. Maybe I need the heat... of a two-colored flame?" He left his room again and found a piece of violet-colored firewood, which was relatively rare in the Ovens. In fact, after searching for a while, he could only find a single piece.

After kindling it, the flame appeared, a two-colored flame that was far hotter than a one-colored flame!

Almost as soon as the two-colored flame touched the surface of the turtle-wok, the second design began to shine brightly. As for the flame itself, it rapidly began to fade away; apparently the power of the flame was being sucked away. Soon, the two-colored flame had burned out, leaving behind nothing but ash. However, the turtle-wok's second design was now shining brightly.

“It worked!” he thought, eyes shining. He quickly put the wooden sword back inside, whereupon silver light began to shimmer. This time, it lasted for several breaths of time longer than the first time he had done the spirit enhancement.

The light began to dim, but then, it suddenly flared up and shot directly toward Bai Xiaochun. This sudden change occurred so quickly that he couldn't even react. His vision swam with light as an indescribably cold sensation washed through him. It almost felt as if he were being frozen over. There was nothing he could do to stop it from happening; it felt as if the coldness was viciously grabbing at his insides.

His face went pale, and his vision blurred. It was as if something inside of him was being sucked out and merged into the turtle-wok.

Finally, the silver light faded away, and within the wok, the wooden sword appeared, sharper than ever. In fact, it was so sharp that looking at it hurt the eyes.

Although it was still painted gaudily, the veins of the wood inside



had already changed. If you scraped away the paint, you would find that they seemed to be filled with starlight, as if the sword had been thoroughly and completely transformed.

In virtually the same moment as the new wooden sword appeared, thunder crackled in the air above the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect. It was almost as if the Heavens were rumbling in rage, causing shock to rise up in the hearts of countless cultivators in the Spirit Stream Sect. However, almost as soon as the thunder crackled out, it was gone.

As the thunder was booming, a second silver design appeared on the wooden sword. After flickering for a moment, the design faded away into the gaudy paint.

Bai Xiaochun, however, couldn't even look at the sword. He staggered backward, a grim look on his face. After a long moment passed, he recovered his composure, although fear still lingered in his heart.

“What did it suck out of me...?” he thought, nervously looking at his reflection in the copper mirror on the wall. After examining himself closely for a moment, he rubbed his eyes, then gaped at his reflection, looking as shocked as a wooden chicken.

There in the mirror, he could see that at the very top of his forehead was a white hair. Although his face didn't look any different, he couldn't shake the feeling that the white hair made him look at least a year older.

“My lifespan!!” he murmured, aghast.

“Just now, my lifespan was reduced. My... my...” He wanted to cry, but no tears would come. His whole purpose in learning about cultivation was to live forever. Now, instead of reaching the goal of living forever, he had actually lost one year off his lifespan, which was a huge blow.

“Screwed.... How could I ever have imagined that I, Bai Xiaochun, would be so careful in life, only to end up screwing myself like this....” He sat there in a daze for a while before finally chuckling bitterly. After calming himself down, he looked back at the turtle-wok, whereupon a strange gleam gradually rose in his eyes. For some reason, after having some of his longevity sucked away, it now felt like there was some sort of connection between him and the wok, as if he could actually control it now.

Heart thumping, he extended his hand and pointed a finger at it.

The turtle-wok immediately flickered, shrank down, and flew toward Bai Xiaochun. In the blink of an eye, it disappeared into the tip of his finger. Eyes wide with shock, Bai Xiaochun leapt to his feet and backed up a few steps. He looked down at his finger, and then back at the empty stove.

“This... this....” He pointed his finger down at the ground, and a black gleam of light flashed, and a clanking sound rang out as the wok appeared once more.

After experimenting a few more times, his expression flickered

from grim, to delighted, to mournful. Finally, he sighed.

“Well, I can suck this thing into my body, but the price I had to pay was a year of longevity. How come it still seems like I screwed myself?”

The next day at noon, Bai Xiaochun was trying to figure out a way to get back the longevity which had been sucked away from him. He was in the middle of doing some research when, all of a sudden, he looked up. He had just sensed that there were eight people heading toward the entrance of the Ovens.

That was something he would never have been able to detect when only in the first level of Qi Condensation. However, now that he was in the third level, he could instantly sense that one of the eight people was none other than Xu Baocai.

Almost at the same time, Xu Baocai's voice suddenly rang out, filled with fury and hatred.

“Bai Xiaochun, you have Elder Brothers to protect you, but so do I! Today, the enmity between the two of us is going to end permanently!”

## Chapter 8: We're Gonna Go All Out!

---

As soon as he realized that Xu Baocai was coming, Bai Xiaochun shot to his feet.

“Well, he came sooner than expected....” he thought, his eyes flickering with hesitation. Although he had done everything he could to prepare in the last half-year or so, he still didn’t feel ready. As far as he was concerned, the best option would have been to go into the conflict in the fourth level of Qi Condensation. Only then would he have felt safe.

Seeing that Xu Baocai had come with a group of seven others, Bai Xiaochun knew that hiding wasn’t an option. Gritting his teeth, he said, “Fine! I’m gonna go for it!”

Taking a deep breath, he quickly donned eight leather coats, and then attached his backup wok to his back. Only then did he nervously open his door and step out.

The first thing he saw was Big Fatty Zhang and the others out by the front gate, hefting meat cleavers and huge kitchen ladles as they blocked the path of Xu Baocai and his friends.

“I was wondering why I heard the crows squawking this morning,” Big Fatty Zhang roared, his voice echoing like thunder as he stood there, tall and mountain-like. “As it turns out, a bunch of brats from the Supervisors’ Department decided to come cause a scene here in the Ovens!”

“Other people might be scared of the Ovens, Big Fatty Zhang, but the Supervisors’ Department doesn’t give a crap about you. We received a complaint from Junior Brother Xu, and we’re here with the authority of the Supervisors’ Department. Do you really dare to resist us?” Seven arrogant-looking men clustered around Xu Baocai. Although they wore servant uniforms, their sleeves were conspicuously embroidered with the character ‘Supervisor,’ indicating that they were from the Supervisors’ Department, and had a status and power beyond ordinary servants.

One of the men was a burly fellow who looked as tough as a tiger and as sturdy as a bear. He emanated the spirit pressure of the third level of Qi Condensation, and his eyes glittered coldly as he stared at Big Fatty Zhang. Apparently, he didn’t seem fazed at all by Big Fatty Zhang and the others.

“Hogwash!” replied Big Fatty Zhang. “He was trying to kill my Junior Brother. How do you explain that!?” He then laughed coldly as his hand whistled through the air, causing the big black wok on his back to suddenly fly up into the air, looking completely majestic. The burly man’s cohorts looked on with flickering expressions, and as for the burly man himself, his eyes widened. Then his hand flashed in an incantation gesture, causing a small flag to fly out. Mist poured out of the flag, from within which the roaring of a wild beast could be heard.

Even as the figurative swords were being drawn, Xu Baocai saw Bai Xiaochun stepping out of his thatched hut, and all his previous rancor and hatred erupted inside of him.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he roared.

As soon as the words left Xu Baocai's mouth, he waved his hand, sending his wooden sword flying out.

Looks of shock could be seen on the faces of Big Fatty Zhang and the others. Just as they were about to leap to stop the wooden sword, the burly man from the Supervisors' Department laughed coldly and blocked their path.

However, it was in that same instant that Bai Xiaochun, eyes bloodshot, roared, "Xu Baocai, you've pushed things too far! You and I are going to go all out!"

Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding. He had never actually been in a fight in his entire life, much less magical combat against another cultivator.

He was so nervous that he was shaking. Roaring to build his own courage, he unleashed the power of the third level of Qi Condensation, holding nothing back from his cultivation base. He poured all of his spiritual energy into his wooden sword, then waved his finger to send it flying toward Xu Baocai.

As the wooden sword whistled through the air, the two designs hidden by the garish paint flickered slightly. Suddenly, the sword expanded in size and exploded with an oppressive coldness as it bore down on Xu Baocai.

The speed and majesty with which it shot through the air caused Big Fatty Zhang, as well as the group from the Supervisors'

Department, to gasp and stare in astonishment. As the ferocious aura of the sword filled the area, all hearts were struck with shock, and suddenly, nobody was interested in fighting any more, and instead stared at the sword.

Xu Baocai hadn't even gotten close to Bai Xiaochun yet, and was struck with terror by his energy. From what he could tell, this version of Bai Xiaochun was completely different than the person he had faced several months before. The way he gritted his teeth and looked like he was going all out caused Xu Baocai's heart to fill with shock.

Next, his eyes widened with disbelief as he saw Bai Xiaochun's wooden sword speeding toward him. It was like a stream of white light, bursting with the type of energy that he had only seen during fights between Outer Sect disciples. He was so flabbergasted that his scalp went numb.

A bang rang out as Bai Xiaochun's wooden sword slammed into Xu Baocai's. Xu Baocai's wooden sword trembled, completely incapable of standing up to the force of the blow. Starting from the tip, it shattered into pieces. In the blink of an eye, it was completely destroyed, transformed into countless shimmering fragments.

As for Bai Xiaochun's wooden sword, it didn't even pause. It continued to shoot through the air toward Xu Baocai, who by this point was scared witless. Using all the power he could muster, he dodged out of the way. The wooden sword whistled past him, slicing his shoulder in the process, and then slashing into a nearby tree.

A boom rattled out as the tree was chopped completely in half, and then collapsed onto the ground, sending a cloud of dust into the air. Xu Baocai let out a miserable shriek as blood splashed all over his arm. Face pale, he immediately fell back.

Luckily for him, Bai Xiaochun wasn't very adept at controlling physical objects. Otherwise, that sword would definitely have killed him.

“Third level of Qi Condensation! Impossible! This is impossible!” Xu Baocai looked at Bai Xiaochun, and he seemed as terrified as if he had just caught sight of a ghost. To be able to unleash such power in a wooden sword clearly required the third level of Qi Condensation, and he simply could not imagine how Bai Xiaochun could have made such an astonishing transformation in only a few months. Things were playing out in exactly the opposite as he had imagined they would, which was impossible for him to accept. It was like he was in a living nightmare.

He wasn't the only shocked one. The burly man from the Supervisors' Department and all of his friends all gasped and looked over at Bai Xiaochun with serious expressions.

“Forming sharpness with spiritual energy and unleashing sword light! That's only possible by cultivating the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art into the Lightness-in-Heaviness Realm! There's no other way to unleash a divine ability like that!” The burly man from the Supervisors' Department gasped, and fear could now be seen in his eyes as he looked at Bai Xiaochun.



His fellows had the exact same reaction, and there was almost no need to even mention Big Fatty Zhang and the others, who were also completely shocked. Although they had sensed that Bai Xiaochun had reached the third level of Qi Condensation, the fact that he could cause sword light to emanate out from the wooden sword, and also make it grow larger, showed that he really had reached the Lightness-in-Heaviness Realm, something they had been completely unaware of before.

Even Bai Xiaochun was a bit shaken by what had just happened with the wooden sword. He stared at the toppled tree, then at the ashen-faced Xu Baocai, and suddenly threw his head back and laughed.

“So, Xu Baocai, it turns out you are the weak one! Eat my sword!” Delighted that he was clearly stronger than Xu Baocai, Bai Xiaochun immediately began chasing Xu Baocai, laughing the entire time.

Bai Xiaochun’s gaze caused Xu Baocai to tremble, and the sight of him rushing over, laughing uproariously, was completely terrifying. Xu Baocai immediately scrambled to flee.

However, he could only take a few steps before Bai Xiaochun was upon him. As he closed in, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but think of how Xu Baocai had chased him relentlessly, forcing him to spend so many bitter days practicing cultivation. That bitterness turned into power, which he now used to kick viciously at Xu Baocai.

“Let’s see you try to kill me again!” he yelled, punching Xu Baocai in the eye. Xu Baocai let out a miserable shriek and fell to the

ground. He wanted to fight back, but his cultivation base was only at the second level of Qi Condensation, leaving him powerless to do anything to Bai Xiaochun.

“You provoked the Young Master, so now he’s going to show you that he’s not to be trifled with!” Fuming with rage, Bai Xiaochun continued to kick and punch Xu Baocai, who was now wailing in anguish.

Cracking sounds could be heard that caused both the burly man and the others from the Supervisors’ Department, as well as Big Fatty Zhang and the others, to all stare in shock. They watched Xu Baocai being beaten, and Bai Xiaochun excitedly doing the beating, and their hearts prickled with fear.

Tears streamed down Xu Baocai’s face, and his heart overflowed with grief. He still couldn’t believe that Bai Xiaochun had experienced such a drastic transformation in just a few short months. Even more unbelievable was that he could use the divine ability of Lightness-in-Heaviness. That was something that was impossible to achieve without years of work and significant skill.

In his mind, Bai Xiaochun obviously must have someone powerful helping him. Furthermore, he was surely more powerful than he had let on before. However, because of his despicable and shameless personality, he had pretended to be weak. Most outrageous was that Xu Baocai had completely fallen for the act.

At that point, Xu Baocai was overwhelmed with sorrow, and simply passed out.

Seeing that Xu Baocai had fallen unconscious, Bai Xiaochun patted the dust off of his clothes and then waved his hand, causing his wooden sword to fly over into his sleeve. Then, looking every bit the lonely hero, he did his best to hide the excitement in his eyes.

The burly man from the Supervisors' Department looked deeply at him, his expression conflicted. Finally, he clasped hands and bowed.

"Junior Brother Bai, you did a good job of concealing your true strength," he said, his face expressionless. "You've earned our admiration." Then, he turned and left with his fellows, picking up the unconscious Xu Baocai and taking him along too.

After they left, Big Fatty Zhang and the others clustered around Bai Xiaochun, smiling broadly. After all, the people from the Supervisors' Department were outsiders, and they knew that Bai Xiaochun had worked hard over the past months. Therefore they were pleased with the overall outcome.

"Nice work, kid. You didn't kill yourself for half a year for nothing!" Big Fatty Zhang patted Bai Xiaochun's shoulder.

"That's right. I worked so hard that I scared even myself!" Bai Xiaochun lifted his chin as proudly as a cocky rooster, as if daring Big Fatty Zhang and the others to ever laugh at him again.

## Chapter 9: Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill

---

According to an ancient saying, time flying by is like catching a glimpse of a white colt flashing past a chink in a wall. That is exactly what happened for Bai Xiaochun. A month later, cold winds blew down the Heavenspan River and through the Spirit Stream Sect. All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun realized that he had been in the sect for a year already.

The past year had been chock-full of one event after another. He had left the world of mortals to become a cultivator, elevated his cultivation base to the third level of Qi Condensation, and had resolved all the conflicts that cropped up due to him joining the Ovens.

Xu Baocai never showed up at the Ovens again, and when Bai Xiaochun left on supply runs and saw him from a distance, he would scurry away, clearly terrified.

Despite all of that, however, after a month went by, Bai Xiaochun looked as anxious as ever, and was sighing constantly. He didn't talk to Big Fatty Zhang and the others about his concerns; he simply wallowed in his helplessness.

“One year of longevity....” he thought, looking at a tree off in the distance, whose leaves had already begun to turn yellow and fall to the ground.

“I'm just like that tree, and those falling leaves are just like my

one lost year of longevity....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun suddenly felt very sentimental.

During the course of the past month, he had come up with countless ideas on how to restore the lost longevity, and yet, that white hair on his head remained as white as ever. He made some roundabout inquiries of Big Fatty Zhang, and learned that in the cultivation world, methods did indeed exist which could restore longevity. However, such methods were either well-kept secrets, or as easy to track down as a phoenix feather or a qilin horn.

Soon, he even lost interest in eating and drinking, and his face became wan and pallid. Eventually, he decided that he had no choice but to give up and accept the fact that he had lost the longevity. However, the following day when he went out on an Ovens supply run, he happened to catch sight of an enormous stone stele below the Third Peak, and all of a sudden, he started to pant.

On the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect, all of the mountain peaks had stone steles like this one. It was covered with dense script, lines and lines of writing that glittered with bright light. Occasionally, the lines of script would flow like water as old characters were replaced by new ones.

That stone stele was where missions were handed out by the Spirit Stream Sect. Anyone in the sect who wanted to could accomplish the missions to earn the spirit stones necessary for cultivation, as well as merit points.

The merit points could be used to pay admission fees to scripture

sermons or the Magical Arts Pavilion. They could also be used to gain access to all sorts of special places in the sect set aside for certain aspects of cultivation. Virtually everything in the sect could be acquired with merit points, and they were actually viewed as more valuable than spirit stones.

At the moment, quite a few Outer Sect disciples were gathered around the Third Peak's Mission Stele, staring at the missions. When one of them selected a mission to take, they would respectfully notify the middle-aged cultivator sitting cross-legged beneath the stele.

There were even some servants mingling with the Outer Sect disciples. The servants wore their uniforms, and the Outer Sect disciples wore green robes embroidered with cloud and river designs, making it very easy to tell who was who.

There were certain missions that only Inner Sect disciples could accept, but missions like that wouldn't show up on this particular stone stele. The missions here could be accepted by Outer Sect disciples and servants alike.

Many ambitious servants viewed this place as their first step in becoming that like fish which leaped over the dragon gate, achieving a meteoric rise.

Bai Xiaochun stood there for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, face grim as he stared at one particular line of script in the middle of the stone stele. Eventually, a look of hesitation appeared in his eyes.

“Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill....” he murmured. “I never imagined that this stone stele would offer a medicinal pill like that as a reward. From the name alone, you can tell that the pill probably increases longevity.” After a bit of thought, he approached the middle-aged cultivator.

When the Outer Sect disciples sensed Bai Xiaochun approaching, they completely ignored him. Considering their status, they didn’t care at all about servants, who they viewed as beneath them.

Bai Xiaochun waited until the crowd around the middle-aged cultivator thinned a bit, then, looking as charming and innocent as possible, clasped hands and bowed in greeting.

“Good afternoon, Elder Brother,” he said.

The middle-aged cultivator looked Bai Xiaochun up and down, then nodded slightly.

The problem of his own longevity swirled in Bai Xiaochun’s mind as he asked: “Elder Brother, one of the missions is to go search for some medicinal plants. The reward is an Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill. Might I ask whether or not that pill is useful for extending longevity?”

“Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill.... Yeah, it’s this mission right here. That pill really can prolong your age and enhance your longevity. In fact, it adds a whole year. However, it has a lot of limitations. It can only be used if you’re at the fifth

level of Qi Condensation or lower, and can only be consumed once. If you take the pill more than one time, it simply won't do anything. You could say that it's valuable, but unfortunately, one year of longevity doesn't really count for much." Seeing how charming and innocent Bai Xiaochun looked, the middle-aged cultivator decided to add a bit more information.

"Generally speaking, this is a pill that disciples will give to their mortal family members who are reaching the ends of their lives. However, it's still very expensive. Do you want to accept the mission?"

Bai Xiaochun looked back at the stone stele, did some calculations, and then nodded.

The middle-aged cultivator waved his finger at the stone stele, and the mission turned gray. At the same time, he produced a jade slip which he handed over to Bai Xiaochun.

"Greenspirit Leaf, Earthdragon Fruit, and Stonebeetle Husk," the man said coolly. "Collect the proper amounts of those three medicinal ingredients, and you can exchange them for an Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill." After that, he paid no further heed to Bai Xiaochun, and instead turned and began to explain other missions to the nearby Outer Sect disciples.

Bai Xiaochun left, clutching the jade slip in his hands, the term "Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill" echoing about in his mind. His eyes began to glow with decisiveness.



“I’m definitely going to get that medicinal pill and make up for the one year of longevity I lost.”

Bursting with determination, he hurried to the Four Seas Room, where he poured over the information available to servants. He soon found an introduction to Greenspirit Leaf, a type of medicinal plant that only grew in habitats occupied by Hopespirit Birds. Hopespirit Birds lived in large colonies, and usually grew to the second level of Qi Condensation, making the Greenspirit Leaf difficult to harvest. As a result, it tended to be expensive.

Unfortunately, there was no record in the Four Seas Room of the Earthdragon Fruit or the Stonebeetle Husk. Bai Xiaochun patted his bag, smiled bitterly, and left. After returning to the Ovens, he asked Big Fatty Zhang and the others about them. Nobody had ever heard of Earthdragon Fruit, but Third Fatty Hei knew about Stonebeetle Husk. According to him, it was nothing more than the moulted exoskeleton of a type of Spirit Insect called a Stonebeetle.

Supposedly, those exoskeletons were extremely tough and heavy, but were uncommon on the south shore. However, they were common on the north shore, a result of the fact that most of the techniques they cultivated there were shamanic magics. Unfortunately, despite the fact that both the north and south shores were part of the Spirit Stream Sect, they were separated by the main mountain bridge. Furthermore, only Inner Sect disciples qualified to be able to cross that mountain bridge to get from one shore to the other.

“What are you asking about these medicinal ingredients for?” Big Fatty Zhang asked, patting his stomach. “You can’t eat them, you

know. Besides, if you try to buy them at the south bank market, the prices are ridiculously high.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard the word ‘market’ mentioned, his eyes suddenly lit up. After offering a quick explanation, he hurried down the mountain. In the year he had been a part of the Ovens, he had only been out of the sect on a few occasions, and yet, was very familiar with the market outside of the sect.

Most of the stalls were run by various cultivator clans related to sect disciples. There were even some establishments that were owned by disciples, and catered specifically to other disciples. Gradually, a set of unspoken rules had come to be established that everyone abided by.

Generally speaking, any supplies that the Ovens needed could be found here.

Bai Xiaochun strolled around the market for a while and visited several medicinal plant shops. By the time he got back to the Ovens, his brow was furrowed and he was heaving sighs left and right.

“What a rip-off! Especially the Earthdragon Fruit. All it is is a kind of fruit that grows underground. Why is it so expensive!?” Bai Xiaochun was dismayed to discover that, given his current situation, he was essentially incapable of getting the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill.

He basically had no concept of money. To him, no amount of

wealth could compare to longevity. Unfortunately, he was currently embarrassingly short on funds. Furthermore, he knew that although his Elder Brothers possessed extremely ample bellies, their bags were as empty as his. They definitely weren't any richer than he was.

Although nobody would go to the trouble of calling them to task for eating a bit of the food from the Ovens' supplies, if they tried to sell that food, the Supervisor's Department would definitely catch on, and would not be happy.

After thinking about the matter from numerous angles, Bai Xiaochun couldn't come up with any ideas for how to make some money, other than to sell some spirit enhanced items.

However, that didn't quite seem like the appropriate thing to do. He continued to ponder the matter for a few more days. On one particular morning, he was sitting cross-legged in his hut practicing cultivation when he heard the sound of bells echoing out through the sect.

The sound wasn't very loud, and quickly faded away. Bai Xiaochun slowly opened his eyes. He wasn't surprised by the tolling of the bells. In fact, they rang out every month. He had learned from Big Fatty Zhang that the bells indicated that a trial by fire was beginning for servants. Whoever succeeded would be given a spot as an Outer Sect disciple.

For those extremely ambitious servants who wanted to become Outer Sect disciples, the first step to becoming the fish who leaped over the dragon gate was to reach the third level of Qi

Condensation. Then they could select one of the trials by fire. The trials by fire were nothing more than a path of stone steps that led to the top of the mountain peak. However, that path was imbued with magical power, making each step extremely arduous. Anyone who managed to make it to the top would be qualified to become an Outer Sect disciple.

Unfortunately, spots in the Outer Sect were limited, so only the first three competitors to the top, the best of the best, would be able to get in. After all, there were many servants in the Spirit Stream Sect. There were thousands and thousands on the south bank alone. Therefore, there were always fierce struggles to succeed.

Of course, the members of the Ovens would rather die of starvation in the Ovens than try to climb the ladder in the Outer Sect. Therefore, on this particular day every month, they turned their noses up at all the hustle and bustle.

Bai Xiaochun closed his eyes. However, a moment later, they snapped open, and a strange expression could be seen therein. Then, they began to glitter with excitement as a new idea formed in his head. He shot to his feet and began to pace back and forth inside his hut. After considering this idea for quite some time, a delighted expression appeared on his face.

“This is the ticket!” he exclaimed. Then he pushed his door open and cried out to Big Fatty Zhang and the others, who were currently debating about which unlucky servant would be promoted to be an Outer Sect disciple.

“Elder Brothers, I’ve figured out how to get rich, but I need your help. Then, we can all get rich together!” He licked his lips and looked at Big Fatty Zhang and the others, eyes gleaming.

Big Fatty Zhang was familiar with this expression; it was the same look Bai Xiaochun had on his face when he brought up the idea of making the bottoms of the bowls thicker. Considering how much that idea had benefited the Ovens, Big Fatty Zhang couldn’t wait to hear Bai Xiaochun’s idea.

“Ninth Fatty, what’s your plan? To tell you the truth, we’re all completely destitute, and it’s all the fault of that damned Supervisor’s Department. If it weren’t for them, we could sell some of our stuff and get totally rich!” Big Fatty Zhang clapped Bai Xiaochun on the shoulder, eyes shining with anticipation.

## Chapter 10: Elder Brother, Don't Go!

---

Bai Xiaochun looked around at his Elder Brothers, who were staring at him with eyes that glittered like spirit stones. Big Fatty Zhang's eyes looked like they were about to erupt with flames. Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, feeling more than a little bit proud of himself.

“Elder Brother, check this out. The three mountain peaks of the Spirit Stream Sect all have a trial by fire every month, giving us servants a chance to become like the fish that leaped over the dragon gate, right? Bai Xiaochun glanced around at everyone, looking like the picture of charm and innocence.

Big Fatty Zhang nodded in response.

“However, the sect only wants the best of the best. Therefore, no matter how many people participate in the trial by fire, only the top three disciples per mountain peak get picked. Am I right?” He licked his lips, and his eyes were beginning to shine. Big Fatty Zhang listened thoughtfully.

A ruminative expression could also be seen on Third Fatty Hei's face, although everyone else seemed confused.

Big Fatty Zhang looked at Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes also began to shine. “Do you mean....”

“Considering the levels of your cultivation bases, Elder Brothers, and mine, it would be easy to sweep the trials by fire of all three

mountains....” Bai Xiaochun looked around at his Elder Brothers. All of them had cultivation bases at the third level of Qi Condensation; Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei were actually at the peak of the third level. Were it not for the fact that they didn’t want to leave the Ovens, and thus kept their cultivation bases suppressed, they could have broken through to the next level long ago.

“Therefore,” Bai Xiaochun continued, speaking very quickly, “all we have to is get to the peak of the mountains as quickly as possible, and hold the top three spots. Then, we can... sell them to whoever comes along after us!” He stopped and looked at Big Fatty Zhang and the others.

Big Fatty Zhang was trembling.

“So low down....” he said. Then he took a deep breath and slapped his thigh. An unprecedentedly bright glow appeared in his eyes. The method described by Bai Xiaochun wasn’t very complicated at all, and was in fact quite simple. It was merely a different way of thinking that, after being spoken out loud, was easy to understand. However, before being explained, it was actually the opposite of what everyone would have thought the idea to be.

Big Fatty Zhang seemed to be in the midst of spiritual enlightenment. It was as if a door had been opened, leading to a brand new type of life. He couldn’t hold back from laughing heartily.

Third Fatty Hei stamped an excited foot, face flushed from either

embarrassment or excitement. “This couldn’t be any more low down! Hahaha!”

As the other fatties understood, they started getting excited. Panting, they couldn’t help but stare at Bai Xiaochun with more admiration than ever.

“Great idea! Let’s do it!”

“Fudge! That bunch of bastards from the Supervisor’s Department have persecuted us into poverty for years now. Thankfully, Ninth Junior Brother is here now. Let’s do it!” Then, they began to excitedly discuss the details of how to carry out such a plan.

After they were sure that there was nothing they had overlooked, they decided to try out their scheme in the following month’s trials by fire. Big Fatty Zhang slapped his thigh in delight.

“Tonight is snack night!”

Excited conversations filled the Ovens. The following month was one of extreme enthusiasm. In fact, just to play it safe, everyone took time to practice cultivation, which was a rare occurrence. In the end, everyone was waiting impatiently for the day of the trial by fire to arrive.

Finally, it did.



The sun shone brightly in the morning sky. Beneath the three mountain peaks on the south shore of the Spirit Stream Sect, an unprecedented scene was playing out. There at the entrance to each of the trails leading up the mountains, shockingly, three black woks appeared.

A closer look revealed that underneath those black woks were extraordinarily formidable fatties. The sight was truly impressive.

These were the nine members of the Ovens, and this was, in fact, their first time attending the trials by fire held for servants at the three Mountain Peaks. Just as they had planned, three of their number went to each of the three mountain peaks.

Large groups of servants were hurrying toward the mountain peaks from all directions, cracking their knuckles and looking very excited. Many of these servants had attempted the trials by fire on numerous occasions, only to fail in the end. For others, it was their first time attending. Everyone was both excited and nervous, and hoped that they could be like a galloping divine steed and make a meteoric rise to become an Outer Sect disciple.

As they neared the various mountain peaks, they caught sight of the fatties from the Ovens.

“The Ovens? What are they doing here?”

“I’ve been a servant for nine years already, and I’ve participated in the trials by fire thirty times. This is the first time I’ve ever seen anyone from the Ovens here....” The other servants were shocked,

and began to spread word. Soon, everyone was talking about the fact that all three of the mountains had people from the Ovens waiting there for the trials by fire.

“This is big! I can’t believe the Ovens people all are going to vie for a spot in the Outer Sect. What’s going on...?”

Bai Xiaochun, Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei were all waiting at the bottom of the third peak. When they heard the shocked exclamations of the other servants, they didn’t react at all. In fact, their faces were so calm that it almost seemed they were away on astral journeys and were completely oblivious to all of the conversations around them.

They were completely and utterly focused on the trial by fire starting line. To them, this was not the path of a trial by fire; instead, it was a glittering, glowing road to spirit stones.

Bai Xiaochun looked especially solemn, with his eyes turned up in thought.

Soon, a figure could be seen floating down from the three mountains. The person to land by Bai Xiaochun and the others was a middle-aged man who had the demeanor of a transcendent being. The first thing he noticed as he alighted next to the starting line was the mountain of flesh that was Big Fatty Zhang.

Then he looked over at Bai Xiaochun and Third Fatty Hei. This man was the Honor Guard in charge of the trial by fire, and currently, his heart was filled with astonishment.

“Did the sun rise from the west today?” he thought. “Usually the people from the Ovens would rather die than become Outer Sect disciples. What’s going on?”

After blinking a few times to make sure he wasn’t seeing things, an expression of encouragement appeared on the man’s face. He flicked his sleeve and began to speak, his voice echoing out in all directions.

“Let the trial by fire for promotion to the Outer Sect... begin!” As soon as the words left his mouth, bells began to toll throughout the sect. At the same time, the starting lines to the trials by fire lit up, indicating that the event had begun.

Instantly, Big Fatty Zhang shot forward, an expression of extreme focus on his face. He kicked up a huge wind as he ran toward the stone steps leading up the mountain, moving so fast you might think he was being chased by a ravenous beast.

Third Fatty Hei also leapt into motion behind Big Fatty Zhang, a brutal gleam in his eyes that seemed to indicate that anyone who tried to overtake him on the path was threatening his life.

In third place was Bai Xiaochun, who leapt onto the path as quickly as a rabbit, thinking about nothing else but the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill. In the blink of an eye, the three of them were dashing madly up the path.

All of that happened so quickly that the other servants barely had

time to react. Their faces immediately fell and, gritting their teeth, they scrambled onto the path and began to climb toward the peak.

Similar scenes played out on the other two mountains, with the fatties from the Ovens instantly taking the lead.

The third mountain peak was known as Fragrant Cloud Peak, and currently Bai Xiaochun and his companions were flying along the trial by fire path, far ahead of everyone else. However, it didn't take long before they felt increasing pressure weighing down on them, forcing them to slow their pace.

Bai Xiaochun looked around and realized that seven or eight people were closing in behind him. Suddenly, he was filled with a feeling of anxiety; it was as if these people were on the verge of stealing his Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill.

“Taking away my Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill is the same as taking away my life!” He suddenly held his breath, causing his face to turn scarlet. Then he sent spiritual energy streaming out into his body, which formed into a powerful, surging force. All of a sudden, he charged forward like wild boar whose tail had just been stepped on. In the blink of an eye, his speed more than doubled, and he had passed Third Fatty Hei and even Big Fatty Zhang.

Third Fatty Hei let out a roar, and then used some unknown technique to similarly increase his speed and suddenly pass up Big Fatty Zhang and race closer to Bai Xiaochun. Seeing that he had just been passed by his two companions, Big Fatty Zhang started getting anxious.

He took a deep breath and then, all of a sudden, his rolls of fat seemed to shrink. It was almost as if he was burning his fat in exchange for a burst of speed. Rumbling sounds could be heard as he closed the distance between himself and Third Fatty Hei. Soon, all three of them were speeding along rapidly.

When the servants behind them saw what was happening, their jaws dropped in shock. Looks of despair appeared on their faces, and yet, they weren't willing to give up so easily, and pushed onward with all the strength they could muster. Unfortunately, there was nothing they could do to catch up with Bai Xiaochun and the others. Their tempers having reached the limit, they began to cry out curses.

“Dammit! Are they high on aphrodisiacs or something? How could they be so fast!”

Soon, enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, and Bai Xiaochun had already reached the top of the mountain. In fact, he could even see two Outer Sect disciples standing just beyond the finish line, waiting there to receive the servants.

As soon as the two Outer Sect disciples caught sight of Bai Xiaochun, they smiled slightly, and one of them said, “Congratulations, Junior Br—”

However, before he could even finish speaking, his eyes went wide with shock.

Bai Xiaochun barreled along a few more paces, but then screeched to a halt a mere step in front of the finish line.

He stood there looking at the Outer Sect disciples, and they looked back at him. Then, he gave them a charming smile, and spun to face the other direction.

“Stop!” he roared, throwing his hands up into the air. Instantly, Third Fatty Hei and Big Fatty Zhang wheezed to a stop next to him. The three of them stood there looking at each other, breathing heavily. Then, they broke out into laughter.

The two Outer Sect disciples exchanged dismayed glances, unsure of what exactly was happening. The fact that these three suddenly stopped running at this point seemed to indicate that they were crazy.

“Junior Brothers,” one of the Outer Sect disciples said cautiously, “the three of you are the first to arrive at the finish line. Just step on over, and you will be promoted into the Outer Sect.”

“Outer Sect disciples?” Big Fatty Zhang said, waving his hand dismissively. “Who wants to become Outer Sect disciples?” He continued to stand there along with Third Fatty Hei, two mountains of flesh who completely blocked the exit gate.

Bai Xiaochun sat down in front of them, jaw tilted up as he waited, lofty and proud.

The two Outer Sect disciples didn't seem pleased. "Huh? If you don't want to be Outer Sect disciples, then what are you doing here? Are you people crazy or something?!"

Big Fatty Zhang, Third Fatty Hei and Bai Xiaochun pretended not to have heard, and kept their eyes focused further on down the mountain.

Soon, enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn. Finally, a long-faced servant struggled up the path, gasping and wheezing. When he saw Bai Xiaochun and the others, he immediately sighed. However, his eyes burned with an unyielding light. This was his ninth time participating in the trial by fire, and this was the first time he'd even come close to winning. But then, along came the people from the Ovens.

Looking furious, he was just about to turn to leave when Bai Xiaochun shot to his feet and yelled, "Elder Brother, don't go! Come, come. You know what? I just can't bear to leave the Ovens. All of a sudden, I don't want to be an Outer Sect disciple after all. Maybe I should give my spot up...."

The long-faced servant stared in shock for a moment, and then his eyes began to shine.

# Chapter 11: Hou Xiaomei

---

Hope! That was the word that flashed into the mind of the long-faced young man as soon as he heard Bai Xiaochun's words. But then he glanced at the mountains of meat sitting there behind him, grinning maliciously, and he hesitated.

“You....”

Bai Xiaochun stepped forward with an utterly charming smile, looking like the type of person who wouldn't harm a fly. He clasped the long-faced servant on the shoulder and said, “Congratulations on becoming an Outer Sect disciple, Elder Brother. You are the fish that leaped over the dragon gate. You will soar like a shooting star, your future limitless. However, your Junior Brother here worked really hard to run all the way to the finish line. Don't you think it would be appropriate to give a little compensation?”

The servant's face darkened. If he didn't understand by now what was going on, then he didn't deserve to have lived for so many years. He looked at Bai Xiaochun, and then at Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei. Then his expression flickered as he rapidly considered the matter, trying to decide if it was worth it.

It didn't take very long before the long-faced young man gritted his teeth and made his decision. If he lost this chance, it might seem like all he was losing was a month of time. However, who knew what other sort of powerful expert would appear during that month. Besides, who was to say whether or not the three people from the Ovens... might not show up again in the next trial by fire.



Most important of all was that this young man was dead set on becoming an Outer Sect disciple, and now, hope had been set down right in front of him. Finally, he stamped his foot.

“How much compensation do you want?” he asked through gritted teeth.

Beaming, Bai Xiaochun quickly replied, “Not much, not much. Look, I prepared for several months to participate in this trial by fire. How about we agree to twenty spirit stones? That should be enough.”

When he heard the number mentioned, the long-faced young man’s heart trembled. He flicked his sleeve, and was just about to refuse, when Bai Xiaochun once again spoke up.

“Look, it’s not that I’m being greedy. All three of us are together, you see, so you can’t just think about me. My Eldest Brother and Third Elder Brother both starved themselves and lost a lot of weight for the sake of this trial by fire.”

In that respect, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t lying at all. Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei had both lost quite a bit of fat on their way up the mountain.

The long-faced servant eyed Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei, and inwardly began to let loose a torrent of curse words. Then, he started to bargain, and ended up agreeing on sixteen spirit stones. Heart twinging in pain, he finally tossed a bag over to Bai

Xiaochun.

“Alright?” he asked, his voice hoarse.

“Wonderful,” replied Bai Xiaochun cheerily. “Okay, Elder Brother, please wait off to the side for a moment. Once we have two more takers, we’ll open the way to the exit gate.” Bai Xiaochun tossed the spirit stones to Big Fatty Zhang.

When the long-faced servant realized that they were going to wait for two more people to come, anticipation suddenly welled up in his heart. It was a situation of “if I get screwed, you better not have a smile on your face.”

By this point, the two Outer Sect disciples on the other side of the exit gate realized what was going on, and their eyes were wide with disbelief.

“Wh-what are you people doing?” one of them shouted. “You’re actually selling spots in the Outer Sect? What gall!”

Big Fatty Zhang was elatedly counting the spirit stones when he heard the Outer Sect disciples. Looking irritated, he turned to glare at them. “What are you hollering for? It was tiring reaching this point, and now I don’t feel like going any further. Don’t tell me we’re not allowed to let other fellow disciples continue on past us? If they want to give us some compensation for our efforts, what’s so wrong with that, huh?”

The two Outer Sect disciples weren't really sure how to respond to such a statement.

It was at this point that seven or eight flushed faces could be seen hurrying up the path. The sound of their gasping pants rang out almost like thunder. In the lead position was a burly man of about thirty years of age. He was bare-chested, and looked very impressive as he strode up to the top of the mountain. Bai Xiaochun immediately stepped forward, eyes gleaming.

“You're a bit late, Elder Brother. However, I suddenly don't want to become an Outer Sect disciple. Would you like my spot?”

The burly man stared in shock, then turned back to look at all the other servants coming up the mountain behind him. Then he snorted coldly and said, “You think you can extort money from me, you little brat? Beat it!”

Roaring, the man waved his arm, causing the spirit pressure of the third level of Qi Condensation to surge out.

Bai Xiaochun backed up a pace and shouted, “Eldest Brother!”

Almost immediately, a mountain of flesh descended from above.

The burly man's face fell as he looked up. Then, a huge boom rang out as the mountain of flesh smashed into him.

The burly man let out a miserable shriek as Big Fatty Zhang

proceeded to sit down on top of him. Although he struggled, it was impossible for him to free himself. In fact, if it weren't for the fact that he was so big and strong to begin with, the air would have been squeezed out of his lungs, and he would have fainted.

When the seven or so servants coming up the mountain behind the burly man saw what was happening, their eyes went wide with shock.

The two Outer Sect disciples also gasped. The burly man stuck under Big Fatty Zhang almost seemed to be deflating, and they couldn't help but feel a bit sorry for him.

Eyes darting about, Bai Xiaochun leaned over and whispered, "Eldest Brother, we have an audience."

Having known Bai Xiaochun for over a year now, Big Fatty Zhang understood exactly what he meant. Glaring down at the burly man, he clenched his massive hands into hammer-like fists and then began to beat him soundly.

"How dare you try to freeload off of Grandpa Fatty! What brazen gall!"

"It was really hard to climb all the way up here. We wanted to become Outer Sect disciples, but just happened to give up at the last minute. Of course we want some compensation!"

"Fudge, I can't believe you refused us!" After beating him for a

bit, Big Fatty Zhang then jumped back up into the air and then slammed down onto the man. The burly man was shrieking miserably, and could barely breathe. Then Big Fatty Zhang prepared to jump up again, and the man suddenly held a bag out in a shaking hand. Face filled with terror, he blurted, "Here, take some compensation!"

Big Fatty Zhang immediately helped the burly man to his feet. Face beaming, he took the bag, glanced inside, then helped the man dust off his clothes.

"Hahaha. Why didn't you say so earlier, bro? Look, people are already lining up ahead of you. All we need is one more and we'll open the path."

The burly man looked both humiliated and enraged, but didn't dare to say anything. He stalked over to stand next to the long-faced servant, feeling incredibly depressed. As for the long-faced servant, he already felt a little better, and couldn't help but feel that he was smarter than this burly fellow.

"That was incredible, Eldest Brother!" Bai Xiaochun said, grinning from ear to ear. Then he looked over excitedly at the other servants who had been following the burly man, but were now standing there looking terrified.

Big Fatty Zhang smiled proudly, then walked back to his place by the entrance, where he sat down again to block the way.

The two Outer Sect disciples exchanged dismayed glances.

Compared to what had just happened now, the way Bai Xiaochun and the others had extorted the long-faced servant almost seemed mild and gentle.

“They’re... they’re actually robbing people!!”

“This is robbery!” They were infuriated, but also a little bit jealous, and couldn’t help but wish they had come up with a similar idea back when they had been participating in the trial by fire.

Most conflicted of all were the seven servants who had been following close behind the burly man. As they watched Big Fatty Zhang crushing and beating the burly man, their eyes began to shine with a bright light.

Previously, becoming an Outer Sect disciple had almost seemed like an impossibility. But now... they all of a sudden had hope.

Looking around excitedly at all the people, Bai Xiaochun suddenly cried out in a high-pitched voice: “Ladies and gentlemen, there’s one spot left. How about this, we’ll give it to the highest bidder!”

Immediately, the crowd of people realized what was happening, and the sound of their panting grew even louder.

The looks in their eyes became even stranger, and their hearts filled with all sorts of wild possibilities. Almost immediately,

people began crying out bids, making it seem almost like an auction.

“I’ll bid ten spirit stones!”

“Eleven!”

“That spot belongs to me. I’ll bid fifteen spirit stones!”

Bai Xiaochun, Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei were instantly elated.

When the two Outer Sect disciples heard what was going on, it was like pouring oil onto a fire. From their perspective, extortion was one thing, and robbery could potentially be overlooked. But to see the situation turning into an auction left their minds spinning. It was so outrageous that waves of shock seemed to batter their hearts. To them, the most villainous among the three wasn’t Big Fatty Zhang, but rather, the seemingly charming and innocent Bai Xiaochun!

“Outrageous! Shameless!” One of them finally gritted his teeth and spun around, eyes bloodshot with either jealousy or fury, he wasn’t sure which, as he went to report the matter to the Honor Guard.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t actually very pleased with the level of bids being called out. His eyes turned up in thought for a moment, and then he cried out, “Ladies and gentlemen, we need to hurry things

up. Otherwise, other servants are going to show up, and then who knows what lengths they'll go to in order to win!"

In response to his words, the voice of a young woman suddenly called out from further back down the mountain.

"I, Hou Xiaomei, bid thirty spirit stones! I come from a cultivator clan and have tons of money. Let's see who dares to try to steal my spot!" A pretty young girl huffed and puffed her way up the mountain. She had white skin and a slim frame, and looked quite young.

When Big Fatty Zhang saw the pretty young girl, his eyes went wide. He was just about to say something, but stopped himself and looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Almost as soon as Hou Xiaomei's words left her mouth, the rest of the servants were thrown into a huge commotion, calling out increasingly high bids. In the end, she named a price that left the horse-faced youth and the burly man trembling in fear. In fact, they even felt like they had just gotten a huge deal.

Hou Xiaomei strode out from the crowd, her ample chest leading the way. She looked back scornfully at everyone else, then joined the long-faced young man and the burly fellow, who called himself Lord Wolf. Together, they walked up to the final step and then exited the trial by fire.

Behind them, Bai Xiaochun, Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei clasped hands and bowed deeply.



“Congratulations, Fellow Daoists. You are the fish who leaped over the dragon gate, you are galloping divine steeds!”

The long-faced servant and the others stood there at the top of the mountain, somewhat in a daze. Although they were now Outer Sect disciples, for some reason, it wasn't as joyous of an occasion as they had imagined. Then they heard the words uttered by Bai Xiaochun and the others, and the long-faced young man and the burly servant exchanged rueful, bitter glances.

Hou Xiaomei, on the other hand, seemed extremely excited. Her charming face was even a bit flushed.

“I never thought that I, Hou Xiaomei, would ever encounter such luck,” she thought proudly.

---

Hou Xiaomei:





## Chapter 12: On The Bamboo Fence

---

And thus, the trial by fire concluded. As Hou Xiaomei walked further up the mountain, Big Fatty Zhang looked at her and rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

“Ah, so fair, so young, so pure....” he said. Then he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, as if he were [comparing the two of them](#).

Bai Xiaochun was also staring at Hou Xiaomei as she walked off into the distance, his heart filled with conflicting emotions. Then he heard Big Fatty Zhang, and turned to find him looking at him out of the corner of his eye.

“Hey, what are you looking at!?” he yelled.

Big Fatty Zhang laughed loudly at Bai Xiaochun’s anger, then pulled out the bag of spirit stones and quickly changed the topic.

“Come, come, why don’t we count our spirit stones? We’re rich now! Hahaha! This really was a great idea.”

“What’s the point in counting them?” replied Bai Xiaochun with a cold harrumph. “No matter how many times you do it, it won’t change how many there are.”

“Ninth Junior Brother, you don’t understand. What you’re looking at is just spirit stones, but what you’re counting is... life.” Big Fatty Zhang rarely spoke of the profundities of life. To hear

him speak in such a way left Bai Xiaochun shocked. He took the bag and tried to count the spirit stones the way Big Fatty Zhang would, but quickly got bored and handed the bag back.

It was at about this time that glittering light rose up along the trial by fire path. Everyone's vision swam, and when it became clear again, they were back at the bottom of the mountain.

When the middle-aged Honor Guard who was in charge of the trial by fire saw Bai Xiaochun and the others, a strange expression appeared on his face. After a moment, he shook his head and ignored them. As far as he was concerned, the sect would have to figure out what to do with the Ovens.

Bai Xiaochun and the others were nervous, but seeing that there were no immediate repercussions, they exchanged glances, cleared their throats, and quickly headed back to the Ovens.

Big Fatty Zhang kept counting the spirit stones over and over again, all the way until they were back at the Ovens. The other fatties soon returned, also elated. Everyone exchanged glances, and then looked extremely proud of themselves.

After the loot had been split up, Bai Xiaochun went back to his hut. He had come to this place seeking to live forever. Were it not for the fact that he needed the medicinal plants to exchange for an Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill, he would never have even thought for a moment about spirit stones.

That night, nobody in the Ovens could sleep. Big Fatty Zhang and

the others were simply too excited from getting rich all of a sudden. In the past, their coin purses had been depressingly empty, but now, the future seemed bright and glorious. That having been said, they were still worried about the possible repercussions of what they had done, making it difficult for them to fall asleep.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he couldn't stop thinking about the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill, and was equally unable to fall asleep.

The next day, the news about the Ovens blocking the path during the trial by fire spread like wildfire through the entire servants' district on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect. Soon, everybody had heard.

“Did you hear what the Ovens crew did?!?!”

“Are they crazy? I can't believe they did that! Heavens! They sold spots into the Outer Sect! Outrageous! How come I never thought to do that?!”

“I've heard that the people from the Ovens have important backgrounds and are really well connected in the sect. Otherwise, how could they dare to do something so infuriating!?” All departments and individuals in the servants' district were talking about the Ovens.

In the following days, the crew tried to keep a low profile, and even avoided going out alone. One evening several days later, Bai

Xiaochun was ladling soup out into one thick-bottomed bowl after another. Suddenly, he heard the sounds of footsteps coming from the path outside.

“Everyone from the Ovens get out here immediately! The Supervisor’s Department has received orders to investigate your role in what happened during the trials by fire!” Even as the voice called out, the main gate of the Ovens was kicked in loudly.

The sound of the door being kicked open echoed out as several servants burst in, all of them wearing the robes of the Supervisor’s Department. Leading them all was none other than the burly man who had come last time with Xu Baocai.

Big Fatty Zhang and Bai Xiaochun exchanged a glance, then walked out nonchalantly to face the combative group from the Supervisors Department.

“I thought I heard the crows squawking this morning,” Big Fatty Zhang said. “I should have known that you would be showing up today, Chen Fei.”

Chen Fei laughed coldly as he looked first at Big Fatty Zhang and then at Bai Xiaochun. Their completely calm demeanor caused him to frown.

On the way, he had been extremely excited, having believed himself to have finally gained the advantage he needed to be able to take down the Ovens, to put an end to the animosity that had existed for years between their two departments.

“Quit pretending to be so calm!” Chen Fei said with a cold, eerie laugh. His eyes flickered with a fierce light. “People of the Ovens, allow me to ask, did the nine of you attend the most recent trial by fire for servant promotion to the Outer Sect?”

“Sure did,” Big Fatty Zhang replied, chuckling.

“That’s all I need to know. Take them away!” Chen Fei didn’t mince his words. He waved his right index finger, and immediately, a dozen or so servants from the Supervisor’s Department quickly hurried out with iron manacles to arrest the Ovens staff.

Seeing this, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but laugh and say, “Is your Supervisor’s Department in charge of everything? You can even disqualify us from being able to become Outer Sect disciples? You guys are pretty powerful.”

Chen Fei couldn’t help but think of the recent incident with the flying sword. He held his hand out to stop the other servants, then looked at Bai Xiaochun with narrowed eyes.

“Junior Brother Bai, if you’re still not convinced of my authority, then answer me another question. Did you Ovens people block the exit of the trial by fire and then sell spots in the Outer Sect? Do you dare to admit that you did such a thing?!”

“Of course I admit it!” Bai Xiaochun replied with a calm nod, looking quite charming. He even pointed at Big Fatty Zhang and



the others and said, “So do they.”

“That’s right, we all do. So what?!” Big Fatty Zhang said with a hearty laugh.

Chen Fei’s face flickered. He had never imagined that the Ovens staff would actually admit to the allegations. He had expected them to give in only after a bitter and protracted battle of wits.

The way things were playing out seemed strange, and an odd feeling was growing inside of him. Therefore, it was without another word that he growled, “Excellent. Since you admit it, then it saves me having to ask more questions. You’re going to come with me to the Court Hall. If any of you dare to resist us, then in accord with the sect rules, you’ll be immediately expelled!”

With that, he flew forward toward Bai Xiaochun, followed by the rest of his group.

However, it was at this point that Bai Xiaochun suddenly extended his right hand and performed an incantation gesture. Immediately, a beam of sword light shot out from his sleeve, transforming into a colorful wooden sword. The instant the sword appeared between the two groups, it let off an oppressively cold glow. Chen Fei stopped in his tracks, his face falling.

“Bai Xiaochun, how dare you resist arrest!”

“Elder Brother Chen, the Supervisor’s Department might have

the right to question us, but where did you get the right to arrest us?”

“Hmph! What you admitted to violates sect rules, of course I have the right to arrest you!”

“Wait, what sect rule did we violate?” Bai Xiaochun asked with narrowed eyes. Big Fatty Zhang and the others also looked at Chen Fei with narrowed eyes and cold smiles.

“You sold a spot into the Outer Sect, which violates sect rule number... wait, huh?” Suddenly, Chen Fei stopped speaking, and his face fell. Beads of sweat popped out on his forehead.

It was only at this point that he suddenly realized that there was actually no sect rule specifically forbidding people from selling spots into the Outer Sect while on the path of the trial by fire.... After all, not many people would think to do such a thing, and even if they did, they would likely not have the gumption to go through with the plan....

“Elder Brother Chen, why are you sweating?” Bai Xiaochun asked, sounding flabbergasted. However, as he spoke, his words grew louder and louder. “Come on, what rule was it that we violated? Just say it. Wait, could it be that we didn’t violate any sect rules? Elder Brother Chen, did you trick the Court Hall into carrying out your own personal vendetta? Is that why you came here to punish us? Elder Brother Chen, what you are doing is a violation of volume nine statute number eleven of the sect rules! That comes with a heavy punishment!” By the end of his speech, he felt great.

“Liar! I....” It wasn’t just Chen Fei’s face who fell. All of the other servants from the Supervisor’s Department all realized that a huge mistake had been made.

It was at this point that Big Fatty Zhang smiled viciously, lifted up both hands, and cracked his knuckles. Fierce gleams appeared in the eyes of the other fatties as they began to walk toward the group from the Supervisor’s Department.

“Chen Fei, the Court Hall will deal with your violation of sect rules,” said Big Fatty Zhang with a vicious grin, his energy surging. “But right now, you had better explain how you’re going to compensate for the Ovens’ cherished main gate, which was painstakingly forged by the hands of numerous past ancestors who died in the process!”

Since they had dared to block the finish line of the trial by fire, they had naturally done so after being fully prepared. Bai Xiaochun had suggested early on that they research the sect rules before enacting their huge plan.

“Charge!” cried Big Fatty Zhang. His mountain-like figure immediately caused Chen Fei and the others to begin to tremble.

Instantly, the clashing and clanging sounds of battle rang out in the courtyard. As for Bai Xiaochun, his body flashed through the air as he alighted on his usual spot atop the bamboo fence which surrounded the courtyard. He flicked his sleeve and clasped his hands behind his back. Looking off into the distance, he looked

every bit the lonely hero who didn't deign to participate in the fighting.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, can exterminate the Supervisor's Department in the twinkling of an eye....”

In describing Hou Xiaomei, Big Fatty Zhang uses the same characters that make up Bai Xiaochun's name

# Chapter 13: You're Coming Too!

---

The Supervisor's Department and the Ovens had been at odds for years. There was a lot of friction between the two, but usually things were kept under control. The worst that ever happened were minor injuries.

The battle over the trial by fire went on for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Big Fatty Zhang and the others beat Chen Fei and the Supervisor's Department squad until they were black and blue. Only when they forked over enough spirit stones to pay for the main gate were they allowed to leave, cursing the entire time.

Before departing, Chen Fei looked over at Bai Xiaochun standing there on the bamboo fence, and the hatred in his heart grew deeper. As far as he was concerned, ever since Bai Xiaochun showed up, the Ovens had only become more and more repulsive.

The fight had attracted quite a bit of attention in the servants' district. Many of the servants, upon realizing that the Supervisor's Department could do nothing to the Ovens, were angrier than ever. However, other servants were like Hou Xiaomei, and felt that what the Ovens had done meant that they would now have a good opportunity in the trials by fire.

In fact, when the trials by fire started the following month, the Ovens crew proudly made their way to the starting line.

The surrounding servants looked at them furiously.

Big Fatty Zhang cleared his throat, looked around at the other servants, and said, “Ladies and gentlemen, if you get to the top more quickly than us, then you won’t have to buy a spot. We’re doing this for the good of the sect! A good struggle will bring out the best of the best!”

He had been instructed by Bai Xiaochun to word things in such a way, and the result was that the surrounding servants clenched their jaws in anger.

When the bells began to toll, and the trial by fire began, the Ovens crew, as well as all the other servants, began to race up the mountain as if their lives depended on it.

Soon, the fatties and Bai Xiaochun were so far ahead they couldn’t even be seen. The other servants smiled bitterly, but continued on with the race.

Apparently, they had taken Big Fatty Zhang’s words to heart....

Yet again, the Ovens crew succeeded in spectacular fashion, which caused a huge commotion in the servants’ district. After all, they had profound cultivation bases, and their physical frames were enormous. No one dared to say anything.

The Ovens was now more in the spotlight than they had ever been. Although they were well known in the servants’ district, their current fame surpassed anything from past years.

Another two months passed, and whenever there were trials by fire, the Ovens crew quickly hurried over. As far as they were concerned, that time of the month was their spirit stone payday.

Bai Xiaochun was also excited by the buildup of spirit stones. He would soon have enough to buy all of the medicinal plants he needed. Eventually, yet another round of trials by fire began.

It was currently dawn. Big Fatty Zhang, Third Fatty Hei, and all the other fatties woke up early. Bai Xiaochun joined them, and the nine of them sped along, then split into three groups, with the group led by Big Fatty Zhang heading toward Fragrant Cloud Peak.

However, a group from the Supervisor's Department intercepted them en route. No explanations were given, and fighting broke out immediately. The Supervisor's Department held the advantage in terms of numbers, leading to a chaotic battle. Soon, the toll of bells could be heard, causing Big Fatty Zhang to grow so anxious that his eyes were shot with blood.

As soon as the sound of the bells could be heard, the group from the Supervisor's Department scattered. Big Fatty Zhang, Bai Xiaochun and Third Fatty Hei were incensed, but had no time to give chase. They immediately sped toward the trial by fire on Fragrant Cloud Peak. When they arrived at the entrance of the path, nobody was there, so they instantly began to race up the mountain.

"Those Supervisor's Department bastards!" cursed Big Fatty Zhang. "Just wait until we're done here, I'll call all the Junior Brothers together and we'll go beat the crap out of 'em!" He was

pushing so hard that the fat in his body was burning away, making him visibly thinner. However, the result was explosive speed.

Bai Xiaochun was also furious. He only needed a few more spirit stones to reach his goal. Gritting his teeth, he pushed forward with all the speed he could muster. Keeping pace with Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei, he shot up the path, passing one servant after another.

As soon as they reached the top of the mountain, their faces darkened. Standing there at the peak, blocking the entrance, were three people.

Standing up front was Chen Fei, flanked by two burly men who appeared to be at the third level of Qi Condensation. As soon as they saw Bai Xiaochun and the others, they started laughing uproariously.

“Big Fatty Zhang and Bai Xiaochun are here! Well, don’t worry, we still have spots left. You want one?”

Big Fatty Zhang gritted his teeth. Eyes bloodshot, he yelled, “Despicable! Shameless! You flunkies!”

“Hey, since this isn’t breaking sect rules, then if you people from the Ovens can come here, then so can the Supervisor’s Department!”

“Hahaha! This business belongs to the Supervisor’s Department



now!”

When Bai Xiaochun and the others heard the mocking laughter of Chen Fei and his friends, their rage burned. Now it was obvious why the others from the Supervisor’s Department had ambushed them on the way here. It was all a big plot!

Big Fatty Zhang let out a bellow of rage and was just about to attack Chen Fei. As far as he was concerned, a fight at this point was unavoidable. Furthermore, he had no way of knowing how often the same thing would happen again in the future. It was essentially the same as stealing spirit stones from him, which caused his fury to bubble and boil.

Third Fatty Hei was equally enraged. However, in the same moment that the two of them were about to attack, Bai Xiaochun looked up in thought and then suddenly whispered, “Eldest Brother, run as fast as you can and then push them over the finish line. We might not get any spirit stones this time, but at least the Supervisor’s Department won’t be able to steal our business in the future!”

Big Fatty Zhang’s eyes immediately went wild with joy. More than ever, he realized how much of a villain Bai Xiaochun was. Laughing heartily, he suddenly shot forward. Third Fatty Hei following Big Fatty Zhang, chuckling, eyes shining.

The path wasn’t very wide, and when Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei charged forward together, they were almost like a huge wall.

A wind kicked up as they sped directly toward Chen Fei and the others.

Bai Xiaochun followed behind Big Fatty Zhang, letting out a wild whoop.

Without the slightest hesitation, Chen Fei and his friends attacked. However, it did no good. Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei were charging forward like startled wild boars.

Their dual attack was shocking enough to make ghosts and gods weep. They charged madly forward, slamming into Chen Fei and his friends, forcing them back. Chen Fei and his friends were completely shocked, and when they realized what the Ovens crew was doing, their scalps felt like they were about to explode.

In any other situation, Chen Fei and his friends would dodge to the side or counterattack. But here, fleeing backward would do no good, and would in fact hasten their defeat.

As they were pushed back, their faces filled with fury.

Obviously, they had no desire to become Outer Sect disciples. After being promoted, they would no longer be in the Supervisor's Department, and would become ordinary disciples again, losing access to their ill-gotten gains.

“Elder Brother Zhang, stop it!” blurted Chen Fei, sweat pouring

down his forehead. “There’s something I want to say–” However, before he could finish, he was interrupted by Bai Xiaochun.

“Eldest Brother, keep going! Push them over the finish line!”

In response, Big Fatty Zhang let out a roar and pushed forward even harder. Third Fatty Hei joined him, and rumbling sounds echoed out as they shoved Chen Fei and two other burly fellows down the narrow path. The first to cross the finish line was one of the burly men, who then stood there at the top of the mountain, wanting to cry, but unable to.

The other burly fellow let out a miserable scream. Staggering backward, he began to beat his chest in regret.

Last to cross over was Chen Fei. No matter how he struggled, the path was too narrow, and a boom could be heard as he was forced off the path. He glared back at Big Fatty Zhang and the others, eyes bloodshot and filled with murder.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” The person they hated the most wasn’t Big Fatty Zhang, but rather Bai Xiaochun, who had come up with the despicable plan to begin with.

The two Outer Sect disciples at the top of the mountain had been watching as the whole scene played out. They cleared their throats, and then backed up a bit, having nothing to say.

Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei now stood at the finish line,

sticking their chests out in pride and laughing heartily.

“See you later, Chen Fei!” said Big Fatty Zhang, slapping his stomach and causing the fat to jiggle. “Hahaha! Although, not in the servants’ district! Hahaha! I’ll miss you! Congratulations on becoming an Outer Sect disciple!”

Chen Fei and his friends very nearly coughed up blood, and in their hearts, they wanted nothing more than to commit murder.

Bai Xiaochun stuck out his lower jaw, looking very pleased. “There’s no need to thank us, Elder Brothers. Congratulations on becoming the fish which leaped over the dragon gate. As Outer Sect disciples, your meteoric success will be like the galloping divine steed. We Junior Brothers offer sincere congratulations!”

However, even as his words rang out, a cold harrumph rang out from the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak.

“There’s no need for congratulations, you’re coming too.”

Almost as soon as the words entered Bai Xiaochun’s ears, he began to tremble. His eyes filled with fear as a powerful force surged down from further up the mountain, enveloped him, and then began to pull up the mountain.

Bai Xiaochun let out a miserable shriek, and quickly latched his arms around a tree that bordered the trial by fire.

“Elder Brothers, save me!” he screamed.

This development occurred too quickly. Before Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei could even react, a cracking sound could be heard as the tree Bai Xiaochun was holding on to split in half. He flew backward like a kite with its string cut, spinning upward toward the top of the mountain. At the same time, a middle-aged man appeared up above, wearing a long blue cloak, looking very threatening despite not looking angry. It was none other than...

Li Qinghou.

## Chapter 14: Third Elder Brother? Third Elder Sister?

---

Chen Fei and his friends were always happy to gloat in the misfortune of others. As they watched what was happening to Bai Xiaochun, they couldn't help but feel as if the grand laws of Heaven were truly being enforced implacably. As for the two Outer Sect disciples in charge of the trial by fire, they looked on with hatred, a sensation that no other servant had ever caused them to feel.

"I don't wanna go...." Bai Xiaochun plopped onto the ground and immediately began to wail, his voice filled with such a feeling of being abused that any listener would surely weep.

Simultaneously, back down on the path, Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei saw Li Qinghou and began to quiver. They quickly bowed their heads to avoid notice.

"Ah, Ninth Junior Brother, it's not that I refused to save you. Now that the Peak Lord of Fragrant Cloud Peak has shown up, you have no choice but to suck it up in the Outer Sect...." Big Fatty Zhang heaved continuous sighs in his heart as he hunched his shoulders and tried to inconspicuously scuttle away. However, it was at that point that Li Qinghou's voice suddenly rang in his ears.

"You two are coming along as well." As soon as Big Fatty Zhang heard the words, a powerful force dragged both he and Third Fatty Hei up into the air. They didn't even have a chance to grab onto a tree before they were hauled to the top of the mountain.

“I don’t want to go!” Big Fatty Zhang wailed, sounding even more miserable than Bai Xiaochun. “I’d rather die in the Ovens than climb the ladder in the Outer Sect....” He sounded so miserable, in fact, that Bai Xiaochun looked up in surprised and forgot to cry.

Third Fatty Hei didn’t say anything, but instead looked silently down toward the bottom of the mountain, his face a picture of depression and longing.

When Li Qinghou heard Big Fatty Zhang’s miserable wailing, his face darkened and he said, “Shut up!”

Instantly, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet, face solemn as he stood there. Instead of looking sullen like he had before, he was the complete opposite, as if he had suddenly switched faces.

Big Fatty Zhang stared in shock, and then immediately stood up. Inwardly, he felt as if the persecution he was enduring was like an ocean that threatened to overwhelm him. He just couldn’t figure out why Li Qinghou wouldn’t say anything when Bai Xiaochun wailed, and then yelled at him when he did the same thing.

“[Zhang Dahai](#), starting today, you’ll be an Outer Sect disciple of Violet Cauldron Peak!

“[Chen Qingrou](#), you’ll be going to Green Crest Peak!

“Bai Xiaochun, you’ll be staying here with me, as an Outer Sect

disciple of Fragrant Cloud Peak.” Li Qinghou looked at Bai Xiaochun and felt a headache coming on. He had just gone into secluded meditation when he got the news about the Ovens crew and everything that was going on. Even the sect Elders were talking about it. Of course, from their perspective, the whole thing was quite amusing, and a nice break from the monotony of cultivation. None of them were even inclined to dole out any punishment.

However, it wasn't something that could be allowed to go on indefinitely, so Li Qinghou came to straighten matters out.

After he finished speaking, he flicked his sleeve, ignoring Chen Fei and the other two men as he looked at something further up on Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Bai Xiaochun sighed bitterly and said his goodbyes to Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei. All of a sudden, he remembered something. He turned his head to look at Third Fatty Hei, a strange expression on his face as he asked, “Third Elder Brother, your name... is actually Chen Qingrou? Hahaha! What a good name. It makes you sound like a smoking hot babe!”

Third Fatty Hei gave a cold but depressed snort, then turned and began to walk down the mountain.

“What's wrong with him?” Bai Xiaochun asked, looking at Big Fatty Zhang.

Big Fatty Zhang looked back at him with a strange look in his



eyes. Then, he clapped him on the shoulder and spoke, his voice solemn and sincere.

“Ninth Junior Brother, there’s something I never told you before. Third Fatty Hei actually isn’t your Elder Brother. In fact... she’s your Elder Sister.” Clearing his throat, he turned and hurried off.

Bai Xiaochun stared at him blankly. It felt like thunder was crashing around inside his head, as if the whole world were collapsing.

“Elder... Elder Sister?” After a long moment passed, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and was about to turn and look at Third Fatty Hei, when suddenly Li Qinghou’s cold voice rang out.

“Quit running your mouth and catch up! ”

Bai Xiaochun hurried after Li Qinghou, looking more bitter than ever. After a few paces, he turned, looked back down at the Ovens, and sighed.

It had been quite a while since Bai Xiaochun learned that the Spirit Stream Sect’s north bank had four mountain peaks, and that the south bank had three. Li Qinghou was the Peak Lord of the third mountain, Fragrant Cloud Peak. The position of Peak Lord was very distinguished in the sect.

Although Fragrant Cloud Peak didn’t look very big, upon

entering it, one would realize that it was filled with the singing of birds and the fragrant aroma of flowers. It looked like a celestial paradise, and was actually much larger on the inside than it appeared to be from the outside.

Actually, the finish line of the trial by fire was only the peak of one of the auxiliary spurs of the mountain as a whole, and really only counted as the foot of the mountain.

Mist swirled about everywhere, as well as an occasional medicinal aroma, a single whiff of which would lift the spirits and send a warm feeling through the body. Bai Xiaochun could immediately tell that this place was extraordinary. He took a deep breath, and his cultivation base, which hadn't made much progress in the past months, instantly surged to life.

Li Qinghou didn't look back, but his eyes gleamed with a bit of admiration. Even he felt that Bai Xiaochun's progress in cultivation in the past year wasn't bad.

"Now that you're an Outer Sect disciple, you can't go and cause any more trouble," Li Qinghou said slowly. "Practicing cultivation is like rowing a boat against the current. It requires constant effort."

Bai Xiaochun didn't dare say anything back. He put on the most charming expression he could, and nodded continuously.

"Sect resources are only one aspect of cultivation for Outer Sect disciples," Li Qinghou continued. "You also need to work hard and

take advantage of whatever opportunities come your way. There are plenty of missions that you can take on for the sect. In a moment, you can go look at the missions and pick a few to start your training.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, his heart suddenly thumped. A while back when flipping through the sect rules, he had noticed one particular rule about Outer Sect disciple being required to accomplish at least one mission every so often. If they didn't, they would be punished by being demoted from Outer Sect disciple to servant.

He immediately went wild with joy. However, Li Qinghou had apparently realized what he was thinking, and coolly said, “Don't go thinking about breaking the sect rules. Other people might be demoted to servant for not accomplishing missions, but if you try something like that, I'll expel you from the sect and return you to your village. A hundred years from now I might even burn some incense for you, if I haven't forgotten about you by then.”

That frightened Bai Xiaochun half to death. If he had never seen this world of Immortals, it wouldn't have been so bad. But now that he was on the way to living forever, he had no desire at all to go back to his village. If that happened, he might as well forget about trying to live forever. He quickly smacked himself in the chest and told himself that he would definitely go and accomplish some missions.

Soon, they were in the middle section of Fragrant Cloud Peak. A building appeared out of the mists, not very large, but very elegant-looking. Visible through one of the windows was a young

man, who sat there quietly reading a book.

As if having sensed someone approaching, the young man looked up, revealing a handsome-looking face. When he saw Li Qinghou, he immediately walked out of the building and clasped hands in greeting.

“Disciple offers greetings, Peak Lord.”

“This is disciple Bai Xiaochun. Take him and get him set up as an Outer Sect disciple.” Li Qinghou gave Bai Xiaochun a final look before transforming into a beam of prismatic light that shot further up the mountain.

Now that Li Qinghou was gone, Bai Xiaochun could heave a sigh of relief. All of a sudden, he felt as if a weight had been lifted off of his shoulders, and the sky was now blue again.

The young man measured Bai Xiaochun up, then laughed.

“Ah, are you the guy who’s been blocking the trial by fire and selling spots? It’s... Bai Xiaochun, right?”

Bai Xiaochun chuckled. “You’re praising me for nothing, Elder Brother. A small thing like that isn’t even worth mentioning.”

The young man laughed even harder at that. Clearly, he was very amused by Bai Xiaochun. Dropping the topic, he began to lead Bai Xiaochun around Fragrant Cloud Peak, pointing out some of the

important buildings along the way.

“Fragrant Cloud Peak occupies an important position on the south bank. Green Crest Peak is known for its sword cultivators, Violet Cauldron Peak for their magical techniques. As for the Fragrant Cloud Peak, we excel in concocting spirit medicines.

“Fragrant Cloud Peak is famous even among the Four Great Sects on this branch of the Heavenspan River. That’s especially true of his excellency the Peak Lord, who is one of the two most famous apothecaries in the Eastwood Continent.

“Therefore, becoming an Outer Sect disciple of Fragrant Cloud Peak also makes you an apprentice apothecary. That means you need to study about plants and vegetation, as well as different medicine synthesizing techniques.” The young man continued to provide even more detailed explanations to Bai Xiaochun as they walked along. Eventually, they reached the location where Bai Xiaochun received his Outer Sect disciple clothing and equipment, including a bag of holding.

Although the bag of holding didn’t fit much inside, Bai Xiaochun found the thing to be marvelous. After testing it out a few times, he put it away as carefully as if it were a precious treasure.

What delighted him more than anything else was that getting promoted to Outer Sect disciple also came with a reward of twenty spirit stones. Now, he had just enough to buy the medicinal plants he needed.

Soon it was dusk. Thanks to the explanations provided by the young man, Bai Xiaochun now knew a lot about Fragrant Cloud Peak. Eventually, the young man led him to a place called the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

From there, he received a jade slip.

“This jade slip describes 10,000 types of plants and vegetation. You need to memorize all of them, and then you can get the second jade slip.

“Junior Brother Bai, the path of cultivation is a long one, and spirit medicines are an aid that you can’t do without. If you can become an apothecary, you’ll be able to achieve a meteoric rise here.

“Apprentice apothecary, journeyman apothecary, master apothecary....” the young man said with a smile. “Junior Brother Bai, your future progress will all depend on what good fortune you encounter.” By the time night fell, the young man had led him to the courtyard dwelling the sect had arranged as his residence.

“Junior Brother Bai, I have to head off the mountain tomorrow, so I won’t be able to accompany you to the Scripture Pavilion. Go there at dawn to get the rest of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art mnemonics. You’ll also be able to pick one more magical technique from the selection they have there. It’s a good opportunity to get some things for free. After that, you’ll have to pay merit points for any magical techniques you want.

“If there’s anything you don’t understand, you can always come looking for me. My name is Hou Yunfei. Many thanks for taking care of Xiaomei for me.” Hou Yunfei smiled, clasped hands and bowed. Then he turned and walked away.

“Hou Yunfei?” Bai Xiaochun returned the bow and watched Hou Yunfei walking off. After a moment of thought, he recalled the face of a young woman.

“Hou Xiaomei!” he thought, blinking. He suddenly realized that he had struck it very lucky, as if he’d shoved a random stick into the ground only to have it grow into a lovely shady tree.

After a moment, he took a deep breath and then looked over at his courtyard residence. His eyes gleamed, and he stood tall and straight beneath the moonlight.

“Well, I guess becoming an Outer Sect disciple isn’t that bad after all!” Flicking his sleeve, he walked into the courtyard.

Zhang Dahai’s name in Chinese is 张大海 zhāng dà hǎi – Zhang is a common surname. Dahai means ocean or literally “big sea”

Chen Qingrou’s name in Chinese is 陈轻柔 chén qīng róu. Chen is a common surname. Qingrou means “soft” or “gentle.” This sounds like a very feminine name

## Chapter 15: Undying Live Forever Technique!

---

Moonlight flooded down onto Fragrant Cloud Peak of the Spirit Stream Sect, dispersing some of the mists that covered it, and causing the entire scene to be spectacularly beautiful.

About halfway down the east face of the mountain, at the end of a side path, was a courtyard residence. The courtyard itself was as large as a field, and was filled with the delicate fragrance of flowers and plants. The residence itself was a log cabin, complete with a desk and a bed inside, all of which were made from some sort of magenta-colored wood that let off a lovely, fragrant aroma. This place was far superior to anything in the servants' district.

The field in the courtyard had been cleared, and was ready for planting. There was even a well in one corner. Bai Xiaochun looked around at the moonlit scene, and his eyes sparkled with satisfaction.

“Outer Sect disciples are official disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect, so naturally they get much better compensation than the servants. This residence really isn't bad at all. Although, I remember Eldest Brother saying that Inner Sect disciples get to live in Immortal's caves... I wonder what those are like.” Bai Xiaochun looked up toward the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Only Inner Sect disciples qualified to live on the top half of the mountain.



After a while, he went back into the log cabin, where he stretched lazily and then took out his bag of holding. After patting it carefully, a bottle of medicinal pills appeared in front of him, as well as a green stick of incense.

“Wow, this thing is awesome,” he thought, rubbing the bag of holding fondly. After a moment, his eyes came to rest on the medicinal pill bottle and the green incense. The pill bottle had a label on it, upon which were written the words ‘Spirit Condensation.’ As for the incense, the words ‘Green Rising’ were carved on the side. He had received similar things when he had become a servant. Consuming such pills would increase his cultivation base, and inhaling the smoke from the burning incense stick would have a similar effect.

“Using them as-is would be a big waste. It would be much better to use spirit enhancement on them first. Maybe I could even use them to break through a bottleneck in my cultivation base.” After pondering the matter for a bit, he made his decision. However, he only had one-colored firewood on hand, so he decided to go down the mountain the following morning to get something better.

Having made his decision, he sat down cross-legged and began to meditate. When it came to his cultivation, he had never given up. Although his progress had slowed recently, he still spent time every day on it.

The whole purpose to practicing cultivation was to live forever, so of course he would stick to it.

The night passed uneventfully, and soon it was dawn. Sunlight

poked through the mist, making it seem as if valuable treasures were descending. Bai Xiaochun had been cultivating all night. He opened his eyes, donned his Outer Sect disciple clothing, and then hurried out of his log cabin to find the Scripture Pavilion that Elder Brother Hou had mentioned the day before.

The Scripture Pavilion was some distance away from his own residence, on another side of the mountain. It took about an hour of walking before he saw a cluster of towering pagodas off in the distance. They radiating shimmering light, and sent pulsing pressure out in all directions.

He encountered quite a few other Outer Sect disciples, all of whom were hustling about busily. When they sensed that Bai Xiaochun was only at the third level of Qi Condensation, they completely ignored him.

Bai Xiaochun didn't care, but considering that most of the disciples he encountered had cultivation bases far higher than his own, he proceeded cautiously. There were even a few he encountered whose cultivation bases were so high that they were unreadable. Those ones always had crowds of other disciples clustered around them, laughing and chatting with them as they walked along.

The closer he got to the Scripture Pavilion, the more disciples he saw. Just as he was about to enter the area of the building itself, a beam of light flew down toward the area from one of the distant mountain peaks. Within that beam of light, it was possible to see a young man standing on a flying disk, who circled around Fragrant Cloud Peak before flying back off into the distance.

“That’s Qian Dajin from the Court Hall! Elder Brother Qian!”

“Elder Brother Qian is an Inner Sect disciple, and also a member of the Court Hall. He’s famous! I heard that he’s in the great circle of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and has access to temporary flight items. I’m so jealous!”

Bai Xiaochun also looked over jealously. After Qian Dajin disappeared, he sighed inwardly.

“One of these days, when I can fly, I’m going take time every day to fly in circles around Fragrant Cloud Peak!” Muttering to himself in anticipation, he began to push his way through the crowd toward the Scripture Pavilion.

The building was huge. The first floor was completely empty except for a long table. Behind the table, an old man sat there with his eyes closed in meditation. All the disciples who wanted to go past him would put their identity medallion onto the table. After it shone with glittering light, they would pass by respectfully.

Copying everyone else, Bai Xiaochun placed his identity medallion onto the table. It only took a moment for it to glitter, after which he picked it back up and followed the other disciples up the stairs to the second floor.

This floor was filled with numerous shelves, which were packed with jade slips or the occasional bamboo scroll. All of them shimmered with bright light, making the second floor of the

Scripture Pavilion an extraordinary place.

Seeing another staircase further off, Bai Xiaochun looked around and then walked over. However, when he tried to step onto it, his foot bounced back.

A young man was sitting off to the side, with straight eyebrows and a bamboo scroll in his hand. When he sensed what was happening, he looked up at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun put on his most charming expression and then curiously asked the young man, “Elder Brother, what qualifications do you need to go up there?”

“What, are you new here?” the young man replied slowly. “You have to be at the fifth level of Qi Condensation to go up there.” With that, he continued to read the bamboo scroll.

Bai Xiaochun could tell the young man didn’t want to be disturbed. Forgetting about the third floor, he began to stroll around the second floor. Occasionally he would pick up a jade slip to examine, or look through some bamboo scrolls. He saw all sorts of different magical techniques, all of which seemed very exciting.

That was especially true of something called the Flame Dao magical technique, which seemed especially exceptional.

After a while, he found a jade slip for the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art. It had descriptions and pictures for the fourth to

eighth levels. He quickly grabbed it and then continued to stroll about.

Time passed, and soon evening was approaching. Bai Xiaochun had browsed about seventy percent of the second floor, and by now, the crowds were thinning.

“These eight seem really incredible....” he thought, looking over his selections. One was a bamboo scroll, somewhat dilapidated, but something that had caused Bai Xiaochun’s eyes to widen with excitement the moment he saw it.

“Undying Live Forever Technique!!”

He took a deep breath as he examined the introduction to the technique. Apparently, cultivating this technique to the ultimate degree would make a person undying and also be able to live forever.

Panting, he once again examined the name of the technique, and then decided that this was his decision!

He had begun practicing cultivation for the purpose of living forever, so finding a technique like this one almost made it seem like they were mysteriously connected by destiny. Laughing heartily, he held the bamboo scroll in his hand as he climbed down the stairs.

Back in the main hall of the first floor, the old man was still

sitting behind the table with his eyes closed, looking exactly like he had before. However, as soon as Bai Xiaochun put the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art jade slip and the Undying Live Forever Technique bamboo scroll onto the table, the man's eyes slowly opened.

He looked Bai Xiaochun up and down, which left Bai Xiaochun trembling. The man's gaze felt like lightning. Shivering, Bai Xiaochun immediately put on his most respectful expression.

Thankfully, the old man quickly looked down at Bai Xiaochun's identity medallion.

"Newly promoted disciples can take a copy of the first eight levels of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art," the old man said slowly, his voice hoarse. "They may also select a technique of their choosing." Then his eyes fell upon the Undying Live Forever Technique bamboo scroll, and he frowned slightly.

"Although the name of this technique sounds astonishing, it's incomplete. Furthermore, the more you cultivate it, the more difficult it becomes. The pain is so excruciating that ordinary people can't endure it. Even most Inner Sect disciples can't cultivate it successfully. The majority give up. It's been here in the Scripture Pavilion for quite some time. Are you sure you want this particular magic?" The old man looked at Bai Xiaochun.

After hearing the old man's words, Bai Xiaochun got the feeling that this technique had been waiting here for years just for him. Then he thought again about the words 'undying' and 'live forever', and his blood felt like it was boiling. He immediately

responded, "Senior, I definitely want it, very much!"

The old man said nothing further to dissuade him. He waved his right hand, sending two blank jade slips flying out. After the copies were made, he handed them to Bai Xiaochun, then paid him no more heed and went back to meditating.

Bai Xiaochun put the jade slips away. Eyes gleaming with anticipation, he left the Scripture Pavilion and headed back to his courtyard residence.

By the time he got back, it was already nighttime. Once again inside his log cabin, he sat down cross-legged, took a deep breath, and pulled out the jade slip for the Undying Live Forever Technique. Then he circulated his spiritual energy and sent it into the jade slip. After closing his eyes, the technique's magical incantation appeared in his mind.

An hour later, he opened his eyes again, and a thoughtful expression could be seen.

Just as the old man had said, the Undying Live Forever Technique was incomplete. According to the description, the technique was cultivated in two ways, internally and externally. It was further broken down into the external aspects of skin, muscle, and tendon.

The internal aspects were bones and blood.

As for this incomplete version, it only contained the technique for cultivating skin. Also, the cultivation method truly did seem to be a torment. Furthermore, to cultivate it required a huge expenditure of resources. However, there were several secret magics listed inside that seemed almost beyond belief. For example, there was one called the Throat Crushing Grasp that was supposedly unbeatable.

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, then looked once more at the words ‘undying’ and ‘live forever’. Finally, his eyes filled with determination, and he followed the description in the information, using both of his hands to strike various positions on his body.

Bai Xiaochun was focused on not dying and living forever in a way that vastly outmatched other people. Therefore, he did exactly as the technique required, and beat himself the entire night.

The following day, his whole body hurt. It didn’t matter whether he stood up or sat down. Even lifting his arm hurt. And yet, he gritted his teeth and continued to do as the technique manual instructed, and forced himself to move.

“Owwwwwww.... Relax then flex.... aaaaoowwwww.... flex then relax!” he said, repeating one of the lines from the technique as he hopped and skipped around the courtyard. He let out one miserable shriek after another, and tears were streaming down his face. Finally, he gritted his teeth, grabbed some spirit stones, and headed down the mountain.

He figured that if he had to move around, he might as well just go out and buy the medicinal plants he needed to get the Age-



Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill. That would be a lot better than doing nothing more than exercising in his courtyard.

Soon, numerous Outer Sect disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak saw a very strange sight. There was a fair-faced young man hopping and skipping about in a very strange fashion. He was also crying out at the top of his lungs in a fashion which almost sounded euphoric.

“Ah ah, oh oh! Ah ah, oh oh! Ah... ah... ah... ah...”

Bai Xiaochun didn't want to cry out, but the pain was just too much. In fact, it hurt so much that he was pretty sure that even not moving would also hurt. However, all he had to do was think about the words 'undying' and 'live forever', and he continued with vicious determination. And thus he continued all the way down to the market outside of the sect.

Trembling, he bought all of the medicinal plants he needed, as well as some one-colored firewood. The two-colored firewood was much more expensive, so he only bought one piece. After that, he ran out of spirit stones.

Gritting his teeth, he went back to the Missions Office and handed in the mission he had taken when he was still a servant. In return, he got the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill.

The pill was yellow, about as big as his thumbnail, and emanated a strange medicinal aroma. He looked at the pill, his body still burning with so much pain that he could barely talk. Sweat poured

down him, soaking him completely.

Clenching his teeth, he climbed back up the steps of Fragrant Cloud Peak, leaving a trail of sweat behind him as he went. He got quite a few surprised and even cynical glances from other Outer Sect disciples. After all, he was really sweating far beyond what was normal.

He really wasn't sure what was going on. By the time he got back to his courtyard residence, it was the middle of the night. As soon as he walked inside, he collapsed onto the ground, unconscious.

Despite having passed out, the pain woke him up several times through the night. By the time the light of dawn spread out across the sky, though, he woke up and realized that the pain was gone.

“An incomplete minor cycle....” he thought, recalling the technique's introduction. If he could go for a full day and night without passing out, that would be a complete minor cycle. If he could complete eighty-one minor cycles, that would count as a minor circulation. After that, his skin would be changed, and would reach a point that the process wouldn't be so painful.

“If the technique were simple, everyone would do it, and then everyone would be able to live forever. The harder it is, the more I'm going to cultivate it! Then I'll really be undying and able to live forever!” His eyes filled with determination; his obsession with living forever was strong, and had reached a truly astonishing level.

Now that his body didn't hurt any more, he pulled out the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill and studied it. He was just about to eat it when all of a sudden he seemed to recall something. Looking around to make sure no one was watching, he hurried into his log cabin and performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing the turtle-wok to appear.

“To consume it the way it is would be a big loss. The best thing to do is eat it after doing a spirit enhancement.” Licking his lips, he produced the two-colored flame firewood and kindled it beneath the turtle-wok. Immediately, the log burst into flames, and moments later, became ash. At the same time, two glowing designs appeared on the turtle-wok.

After a moment of hesitation, he placed the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill inside. Almost as soon as the spirit medicine entered the wok, silver light flashed. Having experienced this before, Bai Xiaochun's expression didn't change in the least, and he continued to stare at the wok.

After a moment, the silver light faded away and, shockingly, two silver designs could be seen on the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill. The medicinal aroma which floated off of it was now much stronger than it had been before, so strong that a mere sniff would enliven the spirits.

“It's too bad I don't have anything to make a three-colored flame.” He picked up the spirit medicine and put it into his mouth. The instant it melted, it transformed into a scalding current that swept through his body.

Bai Xiaochun felt his mind rumbling, and his body felt like a furnace. However, even as he was consumed by heat, the white hair on his head turned black again. A powerful surge of life force replenished him, and after a moment, he could tell that it was even stronger than before. A bit of blood oozed out of his nose.

“Major success!” he thought, his eyes widening. He immediately began to cultivate the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, but found that there was little difference. After all, this spirit medicine replenished vital energy, not spiritual energy. More blood flowed out of his nose, and the scalding current inside of him expanded. He felt like he was an inflatable ball that was on the verge of popping. Astonishment filled him.

Actually, the result of performing a twofold enhancement on the spirit medicine ensured that the result vastly exceeded anything from before, and was far more valuable. Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base, which was at the third level of Qi Condensation, simply couldn’t take it.

At this critical juncture, he suddenly thought of the Undying Live Forever Technique. He immediately leapt up and began hitting himself as hard as possible.

Popping sounds rang out, and the scalding current began to clear up. Bai Xiaochun didn’t dare to stop. It wasn’t until an hour later that the current faded away completely. He was in so much pain that he fell down onto the ground, panting for air. However, he looked more excited than ever, and his eyes shone with an intense gleam.

“It has something to do with the spirit enhancement, but the main thing was that spirit medicine. Spirit medicine... is remarkable.... It can increase spiritual energy and can increase longevity.... Well, I wonder if there’s a type of medicine that can make people live forever!” The more he thought about it, the more excited he got, and the brighter his eyes shone.

“Fragrant Cloud Peak trains apothecaries....

“Well then, I’m going to become an apothecary. I’m going to make.... a Live-Forever Never-Die Pill!” Bai Xiaochun began to pant, and his intrigue for spirit medicine reached an unheard-of level.

## Chapter 16: Meticulously Careful

---

Bai Xiaochun lay there in the courtyard, filled with that obsessiveness of his. His body ached, and yet somehow he could tell that his skin was tougher than before. That made him look forward more than ever to becoming an apothecary.

After laying there in the courtyard for more than an hour, the shaky, painful feeling eventually faded away. Bai Xiaochun crawled into a cross-legged position, eyes flickering as patted his bag of holding to produce the medicinal pills and medicinal incense.

After closer inspection, he took a deep breath, looked around furtively, then headed back into the log cabin, where he once again took out the turtle-wok.

“I could consume this medicinal pill as is. But after I do a spirit enhancement, it should be able to break my cultivation base through from the third level of Qi Condensation to the fourth. It’s too bad that two-colored firewood is so expensive. The Ovens has some, but I’m not longer a servant there anymore, which makes things complicated.” Bai Xiaochun’s excitement regarding the medicinal pill continued to grow. After a bit of thought, he ceased any hesitation and produced a piece of one-colored firewood.

“I’ll just do a basic enhancement! That’ll be good enough!” He quickly lit the firewood, and the resulting one-colored flame caused the first turtle-wok design to light up. He opened the medicinal pill bottle and poured out the three medicinal pills it contained, all of which were as large as [longan fruits](#).

After performing three spirit enhancements, flickering silver designs could be seen on the surface of the medicinal pills. He also enhanced the green incense. In the end, he sat there looking at the four different spirit medicines upon which he had performed a basic enhancement. Finally, he placed the incense stick in front of him and then popped the three medicinal pills into his mouth.

Then he examined the pictures in the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art manual, and followed the mnemonics as he began to practice cultivation. Soon, the spiritual energy in his body was seething. He could now maintain the posture for much longer than before, and he could feel his cultivation base rising rapidly.

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, the little river of spiritual energy inside of him was flowing through his body, and he could sense that he was nearing a breakthrough to the fourth level of Qi Condensation.

“I just need to hold on for one hundred breaths of time, and I can break through!” He gritted his teeth as he continued to maintain the posture in the fourth picture. His body was swelling up so much that he felt like a ball, and cracking sounds could be heard inside of him. Great beads of sweat were rolling off of him.

It was at this point that the spiritual energy began to wane. Bai Xiaochun’s eyes narrowed in concentration, and he blew a mouthful of spiritual energy onto the green incense stick in front of him.

As soon as the spiritual energy touched the green incense, it lit up, causing tendrils of green smoke to swirl about like green snakes. They flew through the air, entering into Bai Xiaochun's eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, and then turning into strong spiritual energy. Within moments, the river of spiritual energy inside of him had doubled in size.

Rumbling could be heard as a wind-like shockwave rolled out from Bai Xiaochun, spreading out through the cabin and then into the courtyard. His eyes opened, and they shone with pleasure.

“The fourth level of Qi Condensation!” he exclaimed, laughing.

He could immediately sense the spiritual energy surging through him, carrying with it a strong life force. He felt more agile, and when he looked down, he saw black filth caked all over his body. That would be the impurities within his body that had just been forced out.

His body flickered as he floated out of the log cabin. After tidying up the courtyard a bit, he stood there feeling very energized. He quickly performed an incantation gesture and waved his finger, causing his wooden sword to fly out of his bag of holding in a streak of light.

He sent it flying back and forth, eyes gleaming with satisfaction. The wooden sword was already extraordinary, but now that it was combined with the cultivation base of the fourth level of Qi Condensation, it possessed an even more striking air.



“Spirit enhancement is pretty awesome. It would be great if I could use a three-colored flame, though. A medicinal pill like that would be incredible!” The more he thought about it, the more miraculous spirit medicine seemed to be. Regardless of whether it was in pill form or incense form, it was definitely an absolute necessity for practicing cultivation.

“I’m definitely going to become an amazing apothecary! I’ll concoct a Live-Forever Never-Die pill! Then I’ll enhance it tenfold—no, wait, I’ll enhance it a hundredfold!” Bai Xiaochun’s desire to become an apothecary was growing stronger. Suddenly, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a jade slip.

It was none other than the jade slip given him by Hou Yunfei when they had gone to the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion together. Inside were images of 10,000 types of plants and vegetation. Only Fragrant Cloud Peak had ancient records of this type, and they were something that all apprentice apothecaries had to master.

Of course, a mere 10,000 types of plants and vegetation was only the beginning. According to Hou Yunfei, after memorizing those, you could acquire another volume.

With a look of resolve, he circulated his spiritual energy, and images of various types of plants and vegetation rose up in his mind. He was filled with a strange feeling, as if a whole new page of life had opened up in front of him. There were even descriptions of the medicinal plants needed to trade for an Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill.

After examining the contents of the jade slip, he realized that

memorizing each of the 10,000 items wouldn't really be that difficult. However, he wasn't just any old person. His goal was to become a great apothecary who could concoct a Live-Forever Never-Die Pill.

The vicious determination concealed in his personality once again exploded out. This was not just memorizing a simple list; he had to carefully observe all of the details of each type of medicinal plant. Only after understanding a plant fully could he move on to the next one.

Back when he had been under such pressure because of Xu Baocai, he had practiced cultivation like mad for the better part of half a year. Now, with even grander aspirations, a similar thing was occurring.

He studied the medicinal plants down to the tiniest detail, until he could close his eyes and recall an image of each and every one.

However, he still felt as if that wasn't enough, and wished he could study the actual items to make his research complete. Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do about that. All he could do was carefully research what he had at his disposal, which included the shapes of the leaves and the patterns of the veins.

Even that wasn't enough for Bai Xiaochun though. He also studied the roots and the fruits. It was almost as if the plants themselves were right in front of him, several times their normal size and dug up out of the ground for him to study.

After that, he still didn't feel confident enough. Next, he studied the tiny hairs growing on the plants, and even the tiny pore-like openings beneath them.

Time passed. Soon, a month had gone by. During that time, he spent time every day practicing the fourth level of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, and was getting much more comfortable with his cultivation base. At the same time, he hadn't forgotten about the Undying Live Forever Technique. Every day, he endured the pain as he ran around his courtyard practicing it, simultaneously memorizing the plants and vegetation from the jade slip. Unfortunately, the jade slip had no table of contents, so he wasn't sure exactly how many he had memorized so far.

In addition to exercising in his courtyard, he would often stop by the spirit field in the corner, where he was growing ten medicinal plants.

These ten plants were Spiritwinter Bamboo. He had gone to Fragrant Cloud Peak's Outer Sect disciple Mission Stele half a month before and selected a simple, non-dangerous mission to get them.

Bai Xiaochun didn't dare to forget what Li Qinghou had told him. Sect disciples needed to complete at least one mission every half year; it was a sect rule that Bai Xiaochun had kept firmly planted in mind.

The merit point reward for this mission was significant, and could actually be even higher depending on how many goods were turned in at the end. It was a simple mission, but required quite a

bit of time wastage; he had to care for the plants for three months before he could hand the mission in.

Of course, the Spiritwinter Bamboo could be catalyzed by a cultivator's spiritual energy, which would make it grow faster. Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun had no time to test that method, and had simply planted the seeds in his spirit field as soon as he had gotten back.

"You grow so slowly," he said, looking down at the spirit field. From the description in the jade slip, he knew that Spiritwinter Bamboo required a lot of spiritual energy to grow properly. If the soil it was growing in didn't have strong spiritual energy, then the cultivator would need to add spiritual energy personally.

He squatted down and picked up a handful of soil from the spirit field. After a moment, he muttered, "I bet this spirit field doesn't have enough spiritual energy, and that's why the Spiritwinter Bamboo is growing so slowly.

"What can I do to get the spirit field's spiritual energy to be a bit stronger...?" After a moment of thought, his expression lit up, and he extended his right hand, within which materialized the turtle-wok.

He looked at the wok, and then back at the spirit field, and his eyes began to shine.

"If this wok can enhance anything, then... I should be able to perform a spirit enhancement on the spirit soil, right?" Feeling

very curious all of a sudden, he quickly dug up the Spiritwinter Bamboo seeds, then filled the turtle-wok with spirit soil and produced a piece of one-colored firewood to perform a test.

Soon, silver light flashed, and the spirit soil in the turtle-wok glowed with the design of a basic spirit enhancement. The light quickly faded, but the spirit soil clearly emanated a much stronger spiritual energy than before.

Bai Xiaochun was delighted. Not feeling the slightest bit inconvenienced whatsoever, he quickly began to enhance one wokful of spirit soil after another. After more than an hour had passed, when he was just about out of one-colored firewood, the entire spirit field had benefited from a basic spirit enhancement.

Of course, that was only the top level of soil. He didn't have enough firewood to go any lower. Therefore, because there was no foundation for the spirit soil, after enough time passed, it would gradually return to normal.

Even so, the current spiritual energy in the spirit field had undergone a Heaven-shaking, Earth-toppling transformation, and was so strong that it caused a fragrant aroma to swirl about.

Bai Xiaochun immediately planted the Spiritwinter Bamboo seeds again, then stood off to the side watching. It didn't take long before some tiny buds popped up and began to grow rapidly.

In the blink of an eye, they were almost a meter tall. In fact, if disciples in the sect who were adept at growing medicinal plants

saw what was happening, they would certainly gasp. Even if a cultivator skillfully nourished the plants with spiritual energy, they wouldn't grow so fast.

After all... no one in the cultivation world had ever been so extravagant as to perform spirit enhancement on soil, all for the purpose of growing ten stalks of Spiritwinter Bamboo....

Not even the famous grandmasters of spirit enhancement would ever think to do such a thing; it was simply far too much of a waste.

Seeing that the Spiritwinter Bamboo was now growing well, Bai Xiaochun felt very pleased. He turned back and continued to jog around the courtyard, simultaneously studying the plants and vegetation in the jade slip.

The sun was setting, and the sky grew dark. Considering that the stalks of Spiritwinter Bamboo had already grown higher than a meter, and had apparently still not reached its full height, it was hard to say... exactly how tall they would be in three months....

That night, Bai Xiaochun finally put the jade slip down. After vicious hard work, he had finally thoroughly memorized all 10,000 types of plants and vegetation. He had even found some areas in the descriptions of the medicinal plants that revealed how they conflicted with other medicinal plants.

“Tomorrow morning, I'm going to go get the second volume about plants and vegetation. I wonder what the test at the 10,000

Medicines Pavilion will be like. Can I really pass it?”

Bai Xiaochun set his chin and flicked his sleeve. He had just been planning on uttering some bold and audacious words, but then, just couldn't help but feel a bit anxious. Clearing his throat, he picked up the jade slip again and began to study some more. He just couldn't shake the fear that some problem would come up in the test.

# Chapter 17: Little Turtle

---

The next morning at dawn, Bai Xiaochun woke up early. As soon as he walked out of his log cabin, he looked over at the Spiritwinter Bamboo and saw that it was already taller than half the height of an average person. He nodded his head in satisfaction, then left the courtyard and headed in the direction of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

The sun rose up over the horizon, sending scintillating beams of light out in all directions. The multi-colored sunlight dancing among the mists like golden carps was a truly spectacular sight. Bai Xiaochun was currently hurrying along a path along with numerous other Outer Sect disciples. He didn't recognize any of them, which caused him to suddenly miss his Elder Brothers from the Ovens.

"I wonder how Eldest Brother is doing, and Third Fatty Hei...." Sighing inwardly, he walked along for about an hour, until the sun was high in the sky. Finally, he saw the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion off in the distance, and the ten shocking stone steles set up outside of it.

Those stone steles were the identifying feature of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion. Green light emanated off of them, rising a hundred or more meters up into the air. It was an amazing sight, like ten giants standing there, completely intimidating.

Visible on the surface of the stones steles were lines of text, a ranking system that went from one to a hundred.



Toward the top, there were no names, only various images, which were in fact the insignias of various Outer Sect Chosen who had become famous apothecaries in the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

Every apothecary had a unique insignia which they would use to mark the satisfactory spirit medicines they had concocted. It was a tradition that went back throughout the ages, and therefore, it was an important honor to all apothecaries.

The last time he had come here, Hou Yunfei had explained all of these things briefly. But now that Bai Xiaochun was coming here alone, he couldn't help but stare at the ten stone steles.

The first thing that caught his attention was the eye-catching insignia on the first place position of the foremost stone stele.

It was a [magic bottle](#)!

If you look up this word for “magic bottle” in the C>E dictionaries, it is often defined as Aquarius (the western constellation). While the term has come to be an accepted translation for Acquarius, the original meaning of the word, especially as it pertains to xianxia, is a type of bottle used in Buddhist rituals

According to Hou Yunfei, that magic bottle was the insignia of... Zhou Xinqi!

The name was not unfamiliar to Bai Xiaochun. Back when he was a servant, he remembered sitting under the moonlight as Big Fatty Zhang munched on a ginseng rootlet and sighed about Zhou Xinqi.

She came from a clan of mortals, and several years ago had been discovered by one of the Senior members of the sect, who sensed that she had unusual latent talent. When she arrived in the sect and was formally tested, her latent talent caused a huge commotion in the Spirit Stream Sect.

She had a rare plant and vegetations spirit meridian, which not only made her speed of cultivation many times greater than the average person, but also gave her astonishing potential when it came to synthesizing medicine. After joining Fragrant Cloud Peak, she became Li Qinghou's only apprentice, and was actually viewed as the most important apothecary in the sect next to Li Qinghou, and a future pillar!

According to the rules of the Spirit Stream Sect, it didn't matter how high a person's latent talent was, they couldn't automatically become an Inner Sect disciple. Therefore, Zhou Xingqi was just like all the other Chosen from the other mountain peaks on the south bank. They all started out as disciples in the Outer Sect, where they trained hard to improve. However, the cultivation resources they had access to were actually provided by the Inner Sect.

Everyone knew that it wouldn't be long before Zhou Xinqi would prove herself and become an Inner Sect disciple.

On top of all that, she was astonishingly beautiful, which earned her the wide admiration of countless male disciples.

Because of all of these reasons, she was very famous among on Fragrant Cloud Peak. In fact, the Inner Sect disciples didn't view her as belonging to the Outer Sect. Even the conservative Inner Sect as a whole feared her.

As Bai Xiaochun considered all these matters, he suddenly felt very curious about Zhou Xinqi. Then he made his way from one stone stele to the next, closely looking at all ten. Soon, he was virtually struck speechless.

“Zhou Xinqi is amazing. Of these ten stone steles, her name is in first place on eight! I don't see her name at all on the other two; presumably she hasn't competed for those yet!” Bai Xiaochun's eyes were as wide as saucers as he looked at all the stone steles.

By now, the crowd of disciples that had gathered around the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion had swelled to quite a number. Bai Xiaochun looked away from the stone steles and found the location where he could exchange his jade slip for the second volume of plants and vegetation. As he looked around, he realized that there really were a lot of people present, almost as if they were gathering in advance for some reason. Suddenly, he heard people talking excitedly.

“Elder Sister Zhou is coming!”

“Hahaha! So the rumors were true! Elder Sister Zhou is coming today. We didn't come in vain!”

“Elder Sister Zhou has already taken first place in the five

volumes of plants and vegetation and three volumes of spirit creatures. This time she'll definitely challenge the fourth volume of spirit creatures!"

The buzz of conversation rose and fell, and the crowd grew more packed. Bai Xiaochun was stuck in the very middle, but thankfully he wasn't as fat as he had been before. After jostling around a bit, he managed to get out in front. Just as he did, he looked up and saw a bright beam of light flying through the air.

It was blue flying silk, standing atop which was a young woman wearing the clothing of the Outer Sect. Long black hair flew behind her in the wind; she had narrow, phoenix-like eyebrows and eyes that shone as cold as the moon. Her complexion was lovely, her frame thin and lithe.

As she flew toward one of the ten stone steles, a cheer rose up from the surrounding Outer Sect disciples. She landed and, without even glancing around, headed directly toward one of the log cabins erected beneath the stone steles.

It was only at this point that Bai Xiaochun noticed that all ten of the stone steles had log cabins beneath them. In fact, there were currently people going in and out of all of them, and that included the one the young woman had just entered.

The surrounding disciples were very excited. Bai Xiaochun looked around and found one particular disciple who looked skinnier and weaker than the others, and sidled up to him.

Then, he cried out loudly, “At long last, I can lay eyes on Elder Sister Zhou again. This time she’s definitely going to take first place on the ninth stone stele!”

After that, he turned and asked the skinny guy for more details about what was going on. Considering the young man was in such a good mood, he quickly gave a detailed explanation.

“Elder Sister Zhou wants to be the first person from ancient times to now to have first place in all ten stone steles. And she’s the only person who could possibly do it. All she has to do is take the test for the fourth and fifth volumes of spirit creatures, and she’ll definitely take first place in both!”

Bai Xiaochun decided that the most important thing was to get the second volume of plants and vegetation, which meant that he had to go take the test in the appropriate log cabin. If he succeeded, the volume would be his. Therefore, he began to push his way through the crowd to the first stone stele. It wasn’t easy, and after he got there, he found that all the cabins were already occupied. After waiting a bit, he saw a crestfallen disciple moping out from one of them, but that didn’t discourage him at all. He immediately entered the log cabin.

Once inside, it was as if he was completely separated from the cacophony of sound on the outside; everything here was peaceful and quiet. The log cabin wasn’t very large, and in the middle, a prayer mat was laid out in front of a small stone stele.

Bai Xiaochun sat down cross-legged in the prescribed fashion, then pulled out the jade slip that contained the first volume of

plants and vegetation. He placed it up against the stone stele, and it sank down inside. The stone stele shuddered, and began to shine brightly.

“According to what the Elder Brother outside said, now is when I’m supposed to decide what insignia will identify me as an apothecary.” After thinking for a moment, he chuckled and drew the image of a turtle. He loved turtles, and although his drawing was a bit misshapen and ugly, in his eyes it was pretty good.

The turtle insignia flickered a few times, and Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. He settled his qi and cleared his mind, and his eyes began to shine brightly. Finally, he slowly reached out and put his hand onto the stone stele. In the moment that he touched it, rumbling sounds filled his mind, and his vision swam. When it became clear again, he was no longer in the log cabin, but in an illusory world.

Before he could size up his surroundings, light flashed in front of him, and countless medicinal plants appeared, filling his field of view.

None of the medicinal plants were intact. Instead, they were broken up into pieces of ten or more, all of which were scattered about.

Just by looking around, it was impossible to tell how many plants there were in total.

This testing method of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion was what

countless Outer Sect disciples of the Fragrant Cloud Peak dreaded. Throughout the years, numerous disciples had taken the test, only to feel completely useless at the end. Because of that, if your name made it into the top 100 on the stone stele, you would be the object of mass envy and approval.

That was especially true of the first place spot, which led to total fame.

A cold, emotionless voice suddenly rang out: “In the time it takes an incense stick to burn, re-assemble the spirit plants. Your test results will be based on the total number you put together. You may begin now.”

“That’s it?” Bai Xiaochun thought. He almost couldn’t believe it. He had immersed himself in studying the medicinal plants in the jade slip to the point where even now, he could already spot hundreds of medicinal plant parts that he could piece together.

He had been really worried about this test, but now that he saw what it was like, he heaved a sigh of relief. However, he still wasn’t completely at ease.

“It can’t be this easy. Considering the test is so simple, the final target to pass must be incredibly high.” Once again feeling nervous, he quickly waved his finger through the air, pointing at a dozen or so medicinal plant fragments. Immediately, those fragments pieced themselves together, forming two medicinal plants.

Next he waved both hands in the air, not even pausing as he sent countless plant fragments flying around and forming together. One medicinal plant after another was formed, until soon he had 100 medicinal plants.

He looked up in thought for a moment, and his spirits lifted. Tuning everything else out, he focused completely on the medicinal plant fragments, his hands flying about rapidly. Then, he suddenly thought about how terrible it would be to fail the test, and went all out with even more vicious determination. His eyes were completely bloodshot, and his hands moved even faster.

100 plants. 200 plants. 300 plants. 500 plants.... 1,000 plants!

Sweat poured down his face, white steam rose from the top of his head, and his hands flew. He looked around, instantly identifying more medicinal plant parts that could be pieced together. Back when he had been memorizing the medicinal plants in the jade slip, he had been so devoted to the process that he had reached the point where he wished he could grind the plants into powder to study them further.

However, that wasn't possible, so he could only study them in minute detail until he felt that he understood them completely.

If any of the disciples on the outside could see what was happening, they would gasp in disbelief. To them, this test was so terrifying it made the hair on their necks stand up straight. None of them could possibly imagine how thoroughly Bai Xiaochun had researched the medicinal plants in the jade slip.



Time passed. 2,000 plants. 3,000 plants....

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were completely bloodshot as he forced his hands to follow his train of thought. He even relied on the power of the fourth level of Qi Condensation, fearful that he wouldn't be able to keep up.

Despite how fast he was going, he wasn't sure if he would be able to pass, so all he could do was grit his teeth and keep going.

4,000 plants. 5,000 plants. 6,000 plants. 7,000 plants....

He wasn't sure how much time had passed, and there were still some plant fragments left. Suddenly, light began to shine everywhere, and his vision swam. The log cabin came back into view again, and the jade slip appeared on the surface of the jade slip. It was the same slip he had put in before, which contained the first volume of plants and vegetation.

"I missed a few, but only a few...." he thought apprehensively. After picking up the jade slip, he walked out of the log cabin, feeling completely crestfallen. It was at this point that he heard the cheering on the outside.

He looked up in the direction of the log cabin Zhou Xinqi had entered. As she walked out, her name suddenly appeared in first place.

# Chapter 18: Drawing The Attention Of The Crowd!

---

“Hahaha! Elder Sister Zhou did it! Didn’t I say she would get another unprecedented first place spot!?”

“She definitely deserves to have that plants and vegetation spirit meridian. Her options for the future are endless!”

“Elder Sister Zhou, we’ll be waiting for you to set another record. When you get first place in all ten, the Great Spirit Stream Bell will toll to notify the whole sect!” All of the surrounding Outer Sect disciple were cheering. Although there were a few disgruntled faces to be seen, and a few sharply spoken words, they were drowned out by the overwhelming applause. Zhou Xinqi’s position among the disciples here was like the sun within the sky. In fact, she was well regarded by virtually everyone on Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Although she was normally quite cold, the applause of the surrounding disciples couldn’t help but make her feel a bit pleased with herself, and she smiled slightly. That smile caused the cheering to grow even louder.

Bai Xiaochun stood there in the crowd, feeling quite envious of her. Muttering to himself, he looked back at the first stone stele and suddenly, his eyes went wide. Then he looked back down at the jade slip with the first volume of plants and vegetation, and after closer scrutiny, he realized that in addition to the original 10,000 types of plants and vegetation, another 10,000 had been added. His heart suddenly swelled with joy.

He then turned his head to look at the first stone stele, and saw that right above the magic bottle insignia was the image of a turtle. Suddenly, he felt wonderful.

He had originally planned to leave immediately. But now, filled with excitement, he waited to hear the audience begin to applaud his accomplishment. However, it quickly became apparent that everyone was only paying attention to Zhou Xinqi, and hadn't even noticed what had just occurred. In fact, even Zhou Xinqi was preparing to depart.

Bai Xiaochun immediately started getting nervous. Blinking, he suddenly called out in his most astonished voice: "Look! Elder Sister Zhou isn't in first place on the first stone stele anymore! Somebody else took her place! Weird! Now there's a really cool-looking turtle there. I wonder who drew that?"

His voice pierced through the cheering, and as people heard the shocking nature of his words, they started to turn around to look at the stone stele. Soon, faces fell, and cries of alarm rang out.

That in turn caused more people to spin around in shock. Expressions of disbelief could be seen as more and more people began to stare at the text on the first stone stele.

"Th-th... somebody actually passed up Elder Sister Zhou on the first stone stele!"

"That's impossible! Heavens! Somebody surpassed Elder Sister

Zhou, and with that ugly-looking turtle. Who could it be?!”

“There’s actually somebody who can pose a challenge to Elder Sister Zhou in terms of skill with plants and vegetation? This is ground-breaking!! Elder Sister Zhou just took first place on the ninth stone stele, but she still only has a total of eight first place positions!”

Everyone was in an uproar, and the sounds of discussion filled the air. Moments ago, everyone had been cheering Zhou Xinqi, and could not possibly have been prepared for something unexpected like this to happen.

Bai Xiaochun stood there in the crowd, so pleased with himself that he almost started laughing. However, he knew that doing so wouldn’t be very appropriate, so he held himself back. Instead, he cried out in shock like everyone else around him.

Actually, he had never had even the slightest clue that he could actually take first place.

It was at this point that Zhou Xinqi, who had just been on the verge of leaving, suddenly trembled where she stood. After hearing the cries echoing out around her, her phoenix-like eyes turned to look at the first stone stele, and she saw the turtle in the first place spot.

At first she frowned, but then her expression calmed. In fact, she wasn’t even shocked at all. As far as she was concerned, when she had taken first place in the test of the first volume of plants and

vegetation, it had been just after she was promoted into the Outer Sect. Back then, she hadn't tried as hard as she could have when she took the test, and that was not to mention the advancement she had made since then.

“Not bad,” she said coolly. “It looks like there might be a new rising star in the sect.” With that, her body flickered as she shot toward the first stone stele.

In her mind, this was a simple matter. The moment someone exceeded her, she would take back what was hers.

Her movement immediately caused a ripple of excitement to run through the crowd of disciples. All of them stared in anticipation as Zhou Xinqi walked into the log cabin to take the test for the first volume of plants and vegetation.

“Elder Sister Zhou is going to take back the first place spot which rightfully belongs to her! Whichever Junior Brother drew that turtle seems pretty good. What a pity that he'll only be able to stay in first place for the time it takes an incense stick to burn.”

“Well, that's how it should be. He's definitely Chosen when it comes to plants and vegetation. He's just unlucky to have encountered Elder Sister Zhou.”

After hearing what everyone was saying, Bai Xiaochun started feeling nervous. Not only had he run out of time, but Zhou Xinqi was simply too famous.

Even he himself was starting to think that maybe he belonged in second place.

“Ah, that’s fine too,” he consoled himself. “If I get in second place, then second place it is. Men shouldn’t be fighting women anyway!” He wanted to leave, but couldn’t quite make himself do so. He couldn’t stop wondering about whether or not he would lose out on what he had just won.

Soon, enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, and the the name list hadn’t changed. Bai Xiaochun was still in first place, and Zhou Xinqi was now walking out from inside the log cabin. Her expression was calm, and she was completely confident, having used eighty percent of her skill to piece together 4,000 of the total of 10,000 medicinal plants.

From her perspective, she had already outclassed all the other naturally gifted disciples.

However, as soon as she walked out, she realized that not a sound could be heard. In fact, all eyes were staring at her with strange expressions. There were even looks of shock.

She looked around blankly, then turned to inspect the stone stele. It was at this point that she realized that the magic bottle which represented her name was still beneath the ugly turtle.

Everything was dead quiet, and all the surrounding disciples, even Bai Xiaochun, were staring with gaping jaws. Bai Xiaochun then looked over at Zhou Xinqi and realized that, other than being

quite good-looking... maybe she wasn't that special after all.

Zhou Xinqi's eyes narrowed briefly, and then her expression returned to normal.

“This person really has some talent with plants and vegetation. Now I'm a bit curious to find out who he is.” Her body flickered and she once again entered the log cabin.

This time, Bai Xiaochun didn't even think about leaving. He stood there in the crowd, holding his breath in anticipation. The surrounding Outer Sect disciples were no longer discussing the matter in loud voices. Instead, they were whispering in hushed tones, watching the unprecedented scene playing out in front of them.

Furthermore, many of them were glancing up at the turtle mark, which now seemed utterly mysterious to them. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, Zhou Xinqi emerged once again, and that enigmatic sensation increased.

The turtle... was still on top!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and then he cried out in a loud voice to incite the other disciples: “Heavens, who is this person!?!?”

Finally, the crowd, which had been silent up until now, exploded with conversation.

“Elder Sister Zhou tried twice and yet didn’t surpass the turtle! How could this be happening? How many medicinal plants did that person complete!?”

“Did anybody see which Elder Brother it was that just took the test?”

Zhou Xinqi stood beneath the stone stele, frowning. Just now, she had used all the skill she possessed to piece together 6,000 plants. She could never have imagined that she would still be stuck in second place.

Her eyes narrowed, and she gave a cold harrumph as she spun and walked back into the log cabin, a very serious look in her eyes.

After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, she emerged again, her expression grave. She turned yet again and went back in, and the same amount of time passed before she emerged, face pale. Expression staunch, she once again entered.

Once. Twice. Three times. Four times....

The surrounding cultivators were panting as they watched Zhou Xinqi try over and over again. However, the end result was that everyone lapsed into complete silence.

The scene playing out in front of them was terrifying. They could never have possibly imagined that whoever owned the turtle



insignia could have pieced together so many medicinal plants, and so thoroughly surpassed Zhou Xinqi.

As of that moment, everyone was completely thunderstruck by the turtle.

That was especially true of Zhou Xinqi, who once again emerged, her beautiful eyes shot with blood. Everyone in the audience gasped.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but clear his throat. Right now, he couldn't just blurt out that he was the person in first place. However, the desire to do that very thing itched in his heart like a restless cat. Actually, it was a wonderful feeling.

"Now's not the time," he thought. "I'll find an opportunity in the future to make a big scene in front of everybody. I'll make sure everyone knows that the person who holds the first place spot on the first stone stele is none other than me, Bai Xiaochun!" Looking up, he realized that it was getting dark, and yawned, looking like the picture of a lonely hero.

"In the twinkling of an eye, I, Bai Xiaochun, reduced Zhou Xinqi to nothing more than ash...." With that, he flicked his sleeve and turned, walking away through the crowd.

As he departed, Zhou Xinqi gritted her teeth, and stubbornly entered the log cabin to once again take the test for the first volume of plants and vegetation....

Eventually, the moon hung high in the sky, and Zhou Xinqi stood there, completely exhausted as she stared up at the turtle. She could never have predicted that a day like this would come, that something like this would happen.

The crowds departed, and word of the turtle became the talk of Fragrant Cloud Peak

One would think that the matter was over, but the next day, as the sun shone down onto the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion, the disciples were shocked to see Zhou Xinqi return and once again go into the first stone stele's log cabin. Yet again, she failed, over and over.

One day, two days, three days.... For a full three days, she never gave up. Soon, the gossip about the turtle disciple had reached a fever pitch in Fragrant Cloud Peak.

There was not a single person who hadn't heard about the matter, and even the Inner Sect disciples were talking about it.

Seven days later, Zhou Xinqi stood beneath the stone stele, staring up listlessly at the turtle. She had tried over and over again during the past seven days. She had held nothing back, and had even pushed herself to the point of piecing together 7,000 plants. However, she still couldn't surpass that mysterious disciple.

“Just who are you?!” she murmured. Finally, she took a deep breath, gritted her teeth, and turned to leave. She would no longer attempt to compete over the first stele. However, the image of that

turtle was now burned deeply into her psyche.

# Chapter 19: The Legend Of The Weasel

---

The comfortable life of an Outer Sect disciple on Fragrant Cloud Peak was great for Bai Xiaochun. Although he missed the delicious food he had access to back in the Ovens, everything else was quite satisfactory.

In terms of his progress in cultivation, and his research into plants and vegetation, he truly felt as if he was living life to the fullest. The only downside was that his courtyard residence was relatively remote, and there was no one around to chat with, so he got bored sometimes.

“Could it be that all cultivators are so lonely?” he thought, sighing as he stood there in the courtyard looking up into the sky. Somehow, he felt much older and more grown up.

The winds of autumn had passed, and snow had begun to fall occasionally, causing the temperature to drop significantly. Snowflakes drifted about in the air, and the Spiritwinter Bamboo in Bai Xiaochun’s courtyard was growing strong and healthy. They were now taller than Bai Xiaochun himself, and emerald green in color. They were like a splash of spring in the middle of the winter cold.

A month had passed since he had taken first place on the first stone stele of plants and vegetation. However, the second volume of plants and vegetation was much more difficult than he’d anticipated, causing his research to slow. But that didn’t change the most important thing to him, which was that Zhou Xinqi never took back the first place spot on the first stone stele.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun still felt a lot of pressure to be able to piece together all of the incomplete medicinal plants that he hadn't been able to before.

“I have an amazing reputation now. I can't let that wench Zhou Xinqi surpass me.” From that moment, Bai Xiaochun decided that he would continue to work harder and harder until he reached his secret goal of being able to proudly announce in front of everyone that he was Apothecary Turtle.

Although his progress with the second volume of plants and vegetation was slow, his cultivation of the Undying Live Forever Technique was rapidly nearing the point where he would be able to achieve a full minor circulation.

Although the pain only continued to get worse, Bai Xiaochun remained completely focused on the words ‘undying’ and ‘live forever’.

“Three more days. According to the description of the Undying Live Forever Technique technique, in three days I'll be able to complete a minor circulation.” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, gritted his teeth, and continued to speed around his courtyard, simultaneously studying the second volume of plants and vegetation.

The three days passed by quickly. On the evening of the third day, it began to snow, covering the Spirit Stream Sect in a blanket of shimmering silver.

Bai Xiaochun was in the middle of running when a tremor ran through him, and he suddenly stopped in place. The pain that he had been enduring for the past eighty-one days suddenly vanished.

A flow of heat exploded through him, converging on his skin, which felt as if it were broiling in an oven.

The snowflakes melted before they could even get near him, instantly transforming into a white mist.

“It worked!” he exclaimed ecstatically, despite his dry throat. Although he felt like he was on fire, when he looked down, he saw a black light flowing over his skin, which circulated around him and then vanished.

He then poked his arm with his right hand, and could tell how incredibly tough it was. His eyes shone, and shook his arms and legs a bit. Instantly, he could tell that he was much faster than before. He started to run forward, then let out a cry of shock as he appeared several meters away in the blink of an eye.

He could now move twice as fast as he could before. Completely delighted, Bai Xiaochun ran around a bit to test out his new speed, and was very satisfied.

Without any further hesitation, he used the Undying Live Forever Technique mnemonic to continue practicing cultivation. This new method involved closing his mouth and nose and then attempting to breathe through his skin. An inhalation and exhalation counted as a minor cycle. He needed to practice eighty-

one minor cycles per day for eighty-one days to complete a minor circulation.

If he could accomplish that, then, combined with the painful minor circulation he had already completed, he would have made his initial success in acquiring the Undying Skin.

After practicing a few times, Bai Xiaochun got the knack of it and struggled to get through one minor cycle. Afterward, his body seemed much more gaunt.

He also felt incredibly hungry, and gurgling sounds could be heard coming from his stomach. He ignored that, and continued breathing, causing his body to get even skinnier. After breathing in and out fifteen times, his body looked like nothing more than a bag of bones.

It was as if all the nutrients that existed inside of him had been sucked out of him. However, his skin looked even more resilient than before.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold on any longer. His vision was fading, and his eyes had turned green from the indescribable hunger which filled him. He was so hungry that he could eat an elephant in a single bite.

“This isn't working, I'm starving to death!!” He looked around, salivating, only to realize that there was nothing in the area to eat except for the verdant bamboo he was growing, which at the moment looked quite attractive.

Unable to hold back because of the incredible hunger, he flashed over to the Spiritwinter Bamboo and took a big bite out of one of them.

Crunching sounds could be heard as he ripped out a huge chunk and began to chomp it down. After swallowing, his face twisted, and he shivered from the bitter flavor.

“Too bitter.... I need to eat some real food....” He suddenly missed the Ovens more than ever. Never before in his life had he ever been this hungry, so hungry that he felt like he was going to faint. His eyes were turning even more green, and he was panting. Finally, he bolted out of the courtyard.

Racing down the mountain path at top speed, he would occasionally encounter other Outer Sect disciples. To them, it felt like a wind was blowing past their bodies, and they turned in shock to stare at Bai Xiaochun running off into the distance.

He raced down the mountain, into the servants' district and straight toward the Ovens. Not wanting to waste time opening the door, he flew over the main gate.

The Ovens crew was in the middle of cooking. Now that Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei were gone, Second Fatty Huang had become the leader. He was currently ladling out some rice gruel into a bowl, when suddenly a wind blasted in his face, and the bowl was gone, to be replaced by Bai Xiaochun's gaping mouth.



“Huh?” Second Fatty Huang was startled, and stood there gaping for a moment. Before anybody could say anything, Bai Xiaochun grabbed one of the nearby woks and began to guzzle it down. Apparently that wasn’t enough, because he then simply dunked his head into the wok, draining the rice gruel....

One wok, two woks, three woks.... Bai Xiaochun rapidly drank down a hundred woks of gruel. He was like a bottomless pit, and still didn’t feel close to being full.

“Still hungry! This isn’t working! I’m so hungry... I need meat!” He looked around frantically and quickly caught sight of the mountains of meat that were his Elder Brothers.

The fatties of the Ovens stared at Bai Xiaochun in shock. They had seen hungry people before, but had never seen someone this hungry. It was like the ghost of a person who had died from starvation.

Then they realized that he was staring at them and salivating. Second Fatty Huang suddenly backed up rapidly, simultaneously shouting, “Ninth Fatty, quickly, there’s some spirit food in the kitchen that we prepared for Elder Zhou!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes gleamed, and he immediately charged toward the kitchen.

Outside, Second Fatty Huang and the others exchanged dismayed glances.

“Did you see that? That’s the fate in store for people who become Outer Sect disciples. Look at how hungry little Junior Brother is....”

“You could beat me to death before I agree to become an Outer Sect disciple!” The other fatties were all completely determined to hold fast to their decision, although they felt bad for Bai Xiaochun.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun was doing his best to control himself and abide by the six lines of truth from the Ovens. He would only nibble the edges, and not eat the entire item. After all, if he broke the rules, that could implicate his Elder Brothers, which was something he would never do.

After drinking the gruel and nibbling the edges of the spirit food, Bai Xiaochun’s hunger had been reduced a bit. He could deal with it now, so he walked out of the kitchen, wanting to cry but not able to find any tears. This Undying Live Forever Technique was far too terrifying. Although he didn’t have to deal with any pain now, the hunger was enough to drive a person mad.

“Second Elder Brother....” he said, looking nervously at Second Fatty Huang.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun looked normal again, Second Fatty Huang finally felt relieved. He walked up and patted him on the shoulder in sympathy.

“Little Junior Brother, don’t worry. Thankfully, we were already preparing some food for Elder Zhou. Look at how hungry you are!

Ai. From now, you come back more often to fill up, alright?”

Bai Xiaochun was very moved. However, he gritted his teeth and decided that he would do the opposite. After all, one day if he ever reached the point where he lost control, he might end up clearing out the entire Ovens....

Second Fatty Huang and the others escorted him out, and Bai Xiaochun sighed continuously as he trekked back up Fragrant Cloud Peak. All of a sudden, the wonderful, carefree feeling from before was gone, replaced by despair. He really was scared of starving himself to death now.

“I wonder if there really were some Spirit Stream Sect disciples who died from starvation in the past. I definitely don’t want to be the first.” Scowling miserably, he was in the middle of trying to figure out how to resolve the food and hunger issue when suddenly he heard a rooster crowing off in the distance.

The sound caused him to pause in place and slowly turn his head to stare in the direction of the crowing.

“Chickens....” Looking around to ensure that nobody was watching him, he ducked into a nearby thicket, vanishing with a whoosh. Then he began to slink along like a weasel.

Moments later, he appeared outside the fence that surrounding Fragrant Cloud Peak’s spirit fowl farm. Inside were a group of chickens strutting around arrogantly, as large as calves, with three-colored tails. Bai Xiaochun eyed them with glistening eyes, and

began to salivate.

“Meat....” he murmured, then began to chuckle, a strange sound that, when coupled with his wide smile, was completely terrifying.

## Chapter 20: Feathers Scattered About

---

Spirit Tail Chickens were far larger than ordinary chickens. They had very resilient feathers and extremely ferocious temperaments. After reaching full maturity, they were comparable to the second level of Qi Condensation.

Not only was their meat edible, so were their eggs. Their blood and bones could be added to medicines, and when you burned their tails, they could create rare, three-colored flames. Because of all that, large amounts of Spirit Tail Chickens were being raised in all of the three mountains on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect.

However, they did not actually belong to the sect itself. Instead, they were the personal property of Li Qinghou and the Peak Lords of the other two mountain peaks, who assigned certain disciples to raise them and take care of them. On Fragrant Cloud Peak, there were three areas specially set aside to breed them.

Bai Xiaochun crouched in the thicket looking at the Spirit Tail Chickens. Back when he had worked in the Ovens, he had never seen the chickens live, but had eaten their meat and knew it was delicious. Furthermore, Big Fatty Zhang had mentioned that they loved to eat spirit insects.

After observing the chickens for a while, Bai Xiaochun flickered into motion. He did not do anything rash, but instead went back down the mountain, where he spent some spirit stones to buy some spirit insects, after which he returned to his courtyard residence.

By the time he got back, he was so hungry that he had to fight not to faint, and immediately began to look around for something to eat.

It didn't take long for his gaze to fall upon the Spiritwinter Bamboo, whereupon his eyes began to shine. The bamboo stalks were already around three meters tall, and thick as a fist. From the spirit glow they emanated, they seemed far beyond ordinary.

Bai Xiaochun immediately hurried over and began to walk around the bamboo stalks, laughing heartily as he studied them closely. Based on what he had studied about plants and vegetation, he was quickly able to identify the toughest among the various stalks, which he cut off at the base and then sliced in half.

When it came to stealing chickens, Bai Xiaochun had a very special method. The key lay in the word 'steal' itself. Being able to get the chickens without anyone noticing was an art form.

He quickly used some of the bamboo to craft a device called a bamboo cicada.

He had learned how to make bamboo cicadas from his father when he was young. Supposedly, they were effective in catching all sorts of creatures from chickens to phoenixes. Once the bamboo cicada itself was finished, he used some strips of bamboo to weave a cord. After finishing that, he tested out the cord's strength, tied it to the bamboo cicada, then flew out into the darkness of night.

“I’m gonna eat chicken!!” His stomach grumbled, but his eyes were shining with a green light. Because of how starving he was, he moved even faster than normal, and soon arrived at the Spirit Tail Chicken farm.

As he neared, he tiptoed up to the fence, placed a spirit insect onto the bamboo cicada, then threw the bamboo cicada over the fence. Next, he crouched hungrily off to the side, holding the cord, which was attached to the cicada.

Further inside the fence were some log cabins, where certain Outer Sect disciples resided and practiced cultivation. The chicken farm was quite large, with over a hundred Spirit Tail Chickens, most of whom were laying on the ground. A few were walking about, occasionally sticking their heads up haughtily and looking around. After a bit of time passed, one of the Spirit Tail Chickens seemed to have noticed something. It turned and looked at something a ways away, then walked over. It immediately saw the spirit insect sitting there, prompting it to peck its beak down to grab it.

However, as soon as the Spirit Tail Chicken pecked at the spirit insect, right at the critical moment, the bent piece of bamboo snapped open, ingeniously forcing the Spirit Tail Chicken’s beak open.

The Spirit Tail Chicken wanted to cry out, but its beak was stuck open, and it couldn’t emit any sounds. Then it tried to close its beak and crush the bamboo, but the bamboo was too resilient, and its efforts were in vain.

No matter how the Spirit Tail Chicken struggled, it couldn't make a peep as it was quickly dragged toward the fence, then up and over, straight into Bai Xiaochun's hands. Bai Xiaochun quickly drew upon the power of the fourth level of Qi Condensation, sending massive amounts of force into his hands, which he used to snap the chicken's neck. Then he tossed it into his bag of holding. From the way he moved, it seemed he was quite a veteran when it came to this sort of thing.

The entire affair took only about thirty breaths of time, and most of that time had been spent lying in wait. Were it not for that, it would have been accomplished even faster.

Bai Xiaochun raced excitedly back to his courtyard residence, whereupon a fragrant aroma soon filled the air. By dawn, the entire chicken was now in Bai Xiaochun's belly.

The only thing left were the feathers and the bones scattered about....

After eating the entire Spirit Tail Chicken, most of Bai Xiaochun's hunger was abated. Having replenished his body, he now felt quite warm and comfortable.

In fact, he even seemed to have a bit more spiritual energy inside. However, the most apparent change had to do with his Undying Live Forever Technique. Bai Xiaochun immediately began to breathe in and out, for roughly eight cycles.

With every inhalation and exhalation, pulsating warmth would



spread through his body and then converge on his skin. That in turn caused his skin to become tougher and more resilient. It even flickered with a black light. However, if you looked closely, it was just as fair and clear as before.

“The Undying Live Forever Technique starts with pain, then moves to hunger. This type of cultivation is definitely quite difficult, however, the results are excellent.” With that, he extended his right hand, within which appeared his wooden sword. Then, he carefully and softly tapped the blade onto the back of his hand.

The wooden sword had a twofold spirit enhancement, but when it touched his skin, Bai Xiaochun could sense a faint force of resistance. He ceased any testing, more convinced than ever that he needed to continue cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique.

“According to the description, the Undying Skin has four stages: gold, silver, copper, and iron. Right now I’ve just started. But if I can last for eighty-one days... I should be able to develop Undying Iron Skin.” Bai Xiaochun looked around at the scattered chicken bones, and in his heart, he now realized what was the key to successfully cultivating the Undying Iron Skin.

“Thankfully, there are plenty of Spirit Tail Chickens on the mountain,” he thought, laughing heartily. He was now more interested in the Spirit Tail Chickens than ever.

What he didn’t know was that in the past 10,000 years in the Spirit Stream Sect, very few people had ever cultivated the

Undying Live Forever Technique. Most who did ended up quitting during the terrifying torment that was the first eighty-one days. Although some managed to continue, the main problem after that was how much money it cost to keep going.

In order to cultivate the technique all the way to the stage of Undying Gold Skin, the expenditure involved was simply terrifying. Even an entire sect would have a hard time forking over so much. After all, those resources could be used on other, less wasteful techniques. Although those other techniques weren't as marvelous, a sect had to consider what was most cost-effective.

That was the main reason why the Undying Live Forever Technique had ended up gathering dust in the Scripture Pavilion.

After practicing cultivation for a bit, Bai Xiaochun gathered up the chicken bones and buried them in the nearby spirit soil, along with the feathers.

Then he left his courtyard residence and found a place where the Outer Sect disciples tended to congregate, where he eavesdropped a bit to see if anyone was talking about the chicken being stolen. Based on his experience stealing chickens back in his village, he knew that the most optimal method was to only strike once every few days.

After eavesdropping a bit, he didn't hear anyone mention anything about a missing chicken. However, during his eavesdropping, he also learned that the three-colored tail feathers of the Spirit Tail Chickens could be used to kindle three-colored flames.

Having learned this, Bai Xiaochun immediately trotted back to his courtyard residence and dug up the three-colored tail feathers out of the spirit soil. Then he sat there, studying them thoughtfully.

“No wonder they raise so many Spirit Tail Chickens here.” He immediately stored the three-colored feathers in his bag of holding. To others, such feathers were nothing more than kindling for three-colored flames. To him, though, they were fuel to perform threefold spirit enhancements.

He didn’t attempt to do so immediately, though. His plan was to get some spirit medicine first, then perform a spirit enhancement to make the medicine more powerful.

After resting for a few days, Bai Xiaochun started getting hungry again one night. He put down the second volume of plants and vegetation and headed out into the darkness of night. When he returned, he had two more Spirit Tail Chickens in his bag of holding.

And that was how time passed by. Soon, a month had gone by, during which time, news about the missing Spirit Tail Chickens began to spread on Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Even Li Qinghou heard about the matter. After all, in only a month of time, a few dozen chickens had gone missing from the three Spirit Tail Chicken farms. However, Li Qinghou didn’t pay much attention to the matter, as he had important affairs to

handle which ended up taking him off of the mountain.

Most depressed of all were the seven or eight Outer Sect disciple in charge of raising the Spirit Tail Chickens. It wasn't that they cared a lot for the chickens themselves, but rather, that the chickens weren't really theirs to begin with. Although the Peak Lord didn't say anything, they felt the matter to be a big loss of face. After all, whoever was stealing the chickens was doing it right under their noses.

However, there was nothing they could do about it. No matter what they did to try to protect the chickens, the chickens kept going missing. What was most puzzling of all was that the chickens went missing without a trace. Not even a sound could be heard, as if they had vanished into thin air.

By now, Bai Xiaochun's body was now completely back to normal, and in fact, he had even gained a bit of weight. However much the Undying Live Forever Technique sucked away from him, he would replenish it with chicken meat. His face had a healthy flush, and he was once again living a comfortable life.

He was in a wonderful mood, and his belly was full. As a result, his research into the second volume of plants and vegetation picked up speed. Eventually, the day arrived when he was finished studying. Based on what had happened last time, he had studied everything in even more minute detail, including the leaves, stems, roots, veins, and even the tiny hairs on the surface of the plants. He was now more confident than ever, and was sure that even if the plants were split into dozens of parts, he would still be able to identify them.

Chest puffed out proudly, he strode out of his courtyard residence.

“This time, I’m going to make sure everybody knows that I am the Lord Turtle who passed up Zhou Xinqi!” Filled with anticipation, he headed straight for the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

## Chapter 21: Big Bro Xiaochun....

---

The 10,000 Medicines Pavilion was one of the most lively locations on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Virtually every day, crowds of Outer Sect disciples came and went. One reason was because of the ten stone steles, and the other reason was because of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion itself, which was located in the middle of all those stone steles. That was where you could exchange merit points for medicinal plants and pill formulas.

Every so often there were also tests for promotion to journeyman apothecary, or occasions when the medicinal pills concocted by various disciples were bought back by the sect. For a variety of reasons, the area was almost always a boiling cauldron of voices.

Because of the lively nature of the place, it had eventually become a place to talk about the latest news. Although it had started as an exchange of information about plants and vegetation, eventually, everything in the sect came to be talked about. Big things, small things, even random gossip was all passed among the various disciples.

When Bai Xiaochun arrived, the place was packed. Some people were coming and going, but about thirty to fifty percent of the disciples were standing around talking. There were also disciples lined up to challenge the stone steles and earn a place on the name lists.

Bai Xiaochun squeezed through the crowds for a while before finally nearing the second stone stele. Just when he was about to walk up to the stele itself, he happened to overhear three Outer

Sect disciples up ahead talking about him.

“Did you guys hear? Something really weird has been going on in the sect recently. Someone has been specifically stealing Peak Lord Li’s Spirit Tail Chickens! Supposedly, over a hundred have already gone missing.”

“What do you mean a hundred? I heard that it won’t be long before Peak Lord Li doesn’t have any chickens left at all. The disciples in charge of the Spirit Tail Chicken farm have put him on the most wanted list. They even said that when they catch him, they’re going to chop him up and feed him to the chickens!”

“Definitely weird. Why are all these prodigies showing up in Fragrant Cloud Peak all of a sudden? First there was the mysterious turtle, and now this mighty chicken bandit!”

Bai Xiaochun subconsciously hunched his shoulders guiltily. After all, he’d done nothing more than steal a few chickens, right? Who would have known that it would cause such a stir? From the look of it, almost everybody knew.

Furthermore, when he realized that the Spirit Tail Chickens actually belonged to Li Qinghou, he got even more scared.

“Gee, I didn’t steal THAT many,” he thought. He almost felt like he was being framed. Just as he was trying to think of a way to change public opinion about the matter of the mighty chicken bandit, he heard the sound of a commotion from behind him.

“Hey girly, what’s with the shoving? Are you late to be reincarnated or something?!”

“So what if I’m shoving, huh? There’s nothing special about you. If you’re afraid of crowds, what’d you come here for anyway? You should feel lucky to get shoved by a girl like me.”

“You....”

For some reason, the voice sounded familiar to Bai Xiaochun. He turned to see a fair, delicate young woman standing there, chest puffed up, hand on her hip as she arrogantly stared down a burly-looking fellow.

“Hou Xiaomei?” Bai Xiaochun said, blinking.

The young woman was indeed Hou Xiaomei, and when she heard his voice, she turned over and saw him, and the arrogance on her face quickly transformed into joy.

“Big bro Xiaochun, it’s you!” she exclaimed, turning and hurrying in his direction. Before she even arrived, Bai Xiaochun felt her hot, pure aura brushing past his face.

“Hey, chaste little sister,” he replied, looking over the vivacious and charming [Hou Xiaomei](#).

This exchange involves some wordplay that’s impossible to translate directly. Hou Xiaomei’s name literally means “little sister,” so it would be silly to call her “little sister little sister.”



Instead he literally calls her by his own name, although it comes across sounding kind of funny and/or flirtatious

Hou Xiaomei's face flushed a bit in response to Bai Xiaochun's words.

“Oh, stop it, big bro Xiaochun!” she said sweetly. “You're such a tease, just call me Hou Xiaomei!”

And just like that, the previously bristling young woman was suddenly beautiful and charming. Quite a few surrounding Outer Sect disciples' eyes began to gleam. As for the burly man she had just been arguing with, he suddenly had goosebumps as he realized what a moody and temperamental girl she was.

“Big bro Xiaochun,” she gushed, “my big brother left the mountain and hasn't come back, and this is my first time here. Where do I go to get the second volume of plants and vegetation?” This really was her first time here. Before, her older brother had helped her handle everything, and now that she was on her own, she didn't know what to do. Luckily, she ran right into Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun smiled as he explained the process to her, going into minute detail. Hou Xiaomei nodded occasionally. By the time he finished explaining, she not only felt that he was a good person, she also felt that he was also extremely knowledgeable.

After finishing, Bai Xiaochun looked at Hou Xiaomei to ensure that she had no further questions. Then he pointed over at the first

stone stele, the one which tested the first volume of plants and vegetation, and calmly said, “See that stone stele? All the people who leave their mark at the top of the list are like Chosen in the sect. Any one of those people are the type who will shake the whole cultivation world in the future.

“I won’t go into all the names, just the second one on the list. See that magic bottle insignia? That represents one of the female Chosen here on Fragrant Cloud Peak, Zhou Xinqi!”

“Zhou Xinqi!” exclaimed Hou Xiaomei, her eyes shining as she looked over at the magic bottle insignia. “So, that magic bottle stands for the Peak Lord’s apprentice, the one with the plants and vegetation spirit meridian, Elder Sister Zhou, who’s destined to join the Inner Sect!” From the way Hou Xiaomei talked about Zhou Xinqi, it was obvious that she held her in immense esteem. Hearing Bai Xiaochun’s explanation about the magic bottle symbol seemed to get her even more excited.

Bai Xiaochun continued to explain matters placidly for a bit longer, until he noticed that Hou Xiaomei seemed to be completely fixated on the magic bottle, and wasn’t paying attention at all to the turtle which had obviously surpassed it. He felt a bit irritated; after all, hadn’t the whole point of his explanation been to get her to notice the turtle?

“Ahem, well, Zhou Xinqi is definitely amazing, that’s why she was able to get to second place on the the first stone stele of plants and vegetation!” He made sure to especially emphasize the words ‘second place.’

Hou Xiaomei gaped for a moment, then frowned.

“Second place? Who does that turtle above Elder Sister Zhou represent? It looks so ugly.”

Hearing this, Bai Xiaochun felt much happier. In his mind, he really did need to educate Hou Xiaomei a little bit more. Putting on a very solemn demeanor, he began to speak in a very earnest tone.

“You’re wrong there, Xiaomei. Did you know that the cool-looking turtle actually represents the most mysterious, admirable and transcendent disciple in the entire sect?

“There are many legends about this person. Whenever he appears, he causes a huge uproar in the sect, and is the center of all attention. Countless disciples follow his every move, envy him and even cheer out loud for him.”

“Really?” Hou Xiaomei was a simple and pure girl, and the things Bai Xiaochun was saying caused her to stare in skeptical shock.

“You should know that two months ago, this disciple made a big splash when he destroyed Zhou Xinqi’s hopes of having the first place spot on all nine stone steles!

“You should know that in his debut appearance, he took the first place spot in the first stone stele. He did it as easily as flipping over his hand.

“You should know that Zhou Xinqi personally witnessed it happen. For the following seven days, she neither slept nor rested. She challenged the stone stele over and over again, but even after she did everything she could, she was still in second place, and was forced to concede defeat.

“You should know that I, Bai Xiaochun... ahem” Bai Xiaochun was getting very excited, and in the end, he wanted to reveal himself as the mighty Lord Turtle, but held back at the last moment. The ideal time to reveal his identity was in front of a big crowd. To do so in front of just a single young girl was too much of a waste.

“That’s all true?” Hou Xiaomei asked, eyes shining as brightly as glittering stars on a moonless night. She was now staring at the little turtle, her flushed face the picture of adoration.

“Of course it’s true,” Bai Xiaochun replied, sighing inwardly. In his mind, he had just done a very good thing, which was helping straighten the course of a child who had strayed off onto the wrong path. Feeling quite a sense of accomplishment, he swished his sleeve and ignored Hou Xiaomei’s adoration as he headed toward the second stone stele.

He elbowed his way through the crowd, then waited for a bit until he was next in line. He had to wait a while for one of the log cabins to empty up, after which he strode into the door and disappeared.

The log cabin looked the same inside as the last one he had been in. After drawing a turtle, his vision swam, and rumbling sounds

filled his ears. When he could see again, he was once again in that familiar empty space. No cold voice spoke out this time; instead, the fragmented plants and vegetation immediately appeared in front of him.

Since Bai Xiaochun had been prepared for this, his eyes shone and his hands sped to work. In the blink of an eye, one spirit plant after another was pieced together.

Time passed. When the incense stick's worth of time was up, there were less than 5,000 plants left, which was significantly better than the record he had set when he had first been tested for the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

Unfortunately, time was up. Bai Xiaochun's vision swam, and when he could see clearly, he was back in the log cabin. Despite having come up slightly short, he was still completely confident in the results. Quickly snatching up the third volume of plants and vegetation, he turned and walked out of the door of the log cabin, heart pounding in anticipation.

Outside, he could see countless Outer Sect disciples, many of whom were looking up at the name list. Bai Xiaochun's currently felt very heroic.

"This time I'm going to shake the entire sect! I'm going to make sure that everyone knows Bai Xiaochun is the famous Lord Turtle!" He could envision what it would be like to be the object of adoration of tens of thousands of disciples, and could already see the look of shock on Hou Xiaomei's face.

When he thought about that, Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold back from laughing loudly. Then he lifted his hand grandly, and was just about to shout out at the top of his lungs that he was the mighty Lord Turtle, when...

All of a sudden, a voice rang out from among the Outer Sect disciples lined up for the trial by fire.

“Do you think the little turtle who stole Elder Sister Zhou's limelight will dare to make an appearance?”

“I doubt it. Elder Sister Zhou's fans are crazy. I heard that they've been searching the entire south bank for the little turtle. They even spread word that as soon as they find him, they'll skin him alive....”

“I heard that too. There are even some Inner Sect disciples who've joined in on the search.”

Bai Xiaochun's hand hung in the air as he listened to what the people were saying. Suddenly, his heart began to tremble. When he heard that there were Inner Sect disciples looking for him too, his forehead began to drip with sweat, and he quickly scratched his head, and then dropped his hand as if nothing at all had happened.

Enraged, he wormed his way through the crowd, an anxious, bereaved expression on his face.

“This is ridiculous. They’re pushing things too far. All I did was take first place, right? And now the Inner Sect disciples are involved? Was it worth it?” This time, his expression was real, and not the least bit pretend.

Almost as soon as he worked his way into the crowd, someone noticed that the name list on the second stone stele had changed, and immediately, a huge uproar ensued.

## Chapter 22: Don't Worry, Elder Sister!

---

“Look at the second stone stele! That little turtle... it's showed up again!!”

“It's in first place again! Just who is this little turtle? Whoever it is has taken two first place spots in a row!”

“Now Elder Sister Zhou doesn't have eight first place spots, she only has seven!”

The Outer Sect disciples were in a complete uproar, and countless cries of alarm could be heard ringing about. However, there was one voice in the crowd, a girl, who was crying out excitedly.

“Go, little turtle, go!” That young woman was none other than Hou Xiaomei. Thanks to Bai Xiaochun's earlier prodding, she was now a huge fan of the little turtle. Now that she suddenly saw the little turtle take two first place spots, her sense of adoration increased rapidly. In fact, the little turtle had now surpassed Zhou Xinqi's place in her heart.

The sound of commotion rolled in waves, until everyone was shouting out. After all, the little turtle really was very famous, and now it had once again proven by its actions that whoever it represented was qualified to challenge Zhou Xinqi.

In fact, there were even some people who were starting to anticipate the scene of the little turtle surpassing Zhou Xinqi in all ten stone steles.



Bai Xiaochun was there in the crowd, still a bit depressed, but also secretly felt pleased with himself. He was only a bit regretful that nobody knew who he was.

“Hmph. One of these days, I’m going to reveal that I’m Lord Turtle in front of an even bigger crowd!” he promised himself.

Despite his oath, he wasn’t ready to give up just yet. He next began to participate in all the shouting. Occasionally, a piercing voice would ring out, drawing the crowd into further commotion.

“Heavens! Who could it be!? I love this guy!”

“The idol of the masses! Lord Turtle is invincible!”

Thanks to Bai Xiaochun’s piercing cries, the Outer Sect disciples’ discussions grew even more feverish. However, it was in that instant that a cold snort rang out, and a figure leapt out of the crowd to stand atop one of the log cabins.

It was a young man with a cold, grim expression on his face. His icy voice rang out across the crowd as he said, “I better not find out who that damned little turtle is. If I do, he’ll regret ever having stolen the limelight from Junior Sister Zhou!”

“Same here! The little turtle is probably hiding in the crowd right now. I’m gonna find him!” The second voice belonged to that of another young man, who also flew up to the roof of the log cabin

and looked around coldly at the crowd. Apparently he had his eye on Bai Xiaochun, not because he thought that he was the little turtle, but because Bai Xiaochun's shouting earlier had been quite blatant, and irritated the young man.

Soon, more people began to say similar things, seven or eight of them. Furthermore, when they unleashed the incredible power of their cultivation bases, it was obvious that the strongest among their number was in the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

These people were obviously fans of Zhou Xinqi, and famous ones at that. Their appearance on the scene caused the crowd to immediately quiet down and stop discussing the matter. However, inwardly, most people were irritated at what was happening, and loathed the young men more than ever.

Although everyone liked Zhou Xinqi, she was only a single person. The disciples present weren't stupid, and actually admired someone who could challenge Zhou Xinqi based on individual merit.

When Bai Xiaochun found himself the subject of the young man's glare, he didn't feel very confident. However, after considering that there were so many bystanders who the young man didn't dare to offend, Bai Xiaochun glared back with a look that said, "If you dare to do something to me, I'll fight back to the death."

At this point in the standoff, a beam of light shot through the air in the direction of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion, within which a graceful figure could be seen. It was none other than Zhou Xinqi.

“It’s Elder Sister Zhou.”

“Elder Sister Zhou is coming.” The standoff ended. As soon as the Outer Sect disciples caught sight of Zhou Xinqi, smiles broke out on their faces.

The seven or eight young men who were her fans quickly retracted their cultivation bases. Looking completely confident and at ease, they clasped hands to Zhou Xinqi.

Zhou Xinqi had come because first, she had already heard about the change to the ranking list on the second stone stele, and second, she had another matter to attend to. After glancing around, she easily guessed what had caused the standoff. She looked over at the eight fans, her eyes flickering with displeasure and even disgust.

“The affairs of Zhou Xinqi have not reached the level where others need to interfere,” she said coldly. “Besides, if a new Chosen disciple has appeared on Fragrant Cloud Peak, that’s something fortunate for the sect as a whole. If you people let something like this happen again, then don’t blame your Junior Sister for losing her temper.” Her voice cut with the sharpness of a sword, and the eight fans looked angry. However, they didn’t dare to say a word.

Zhou Xinqi looked up at the little turtle on the second stone stele, and her heart filled with an unyielding spirit. She looked out over the crowd and said in a cool, arrogant voice, “Whichever Junior Brother it was who happened to surpass me on the stones steles for

the first and second volumes of plants and vegetation, if you're still scuttling around in the crowd and don't feel like showing your true face, then so be it. Do as you wish."

The surrounding Outer Sect disciple cheered in response. For most of them, Zhou Xinqi was the true Chosen of Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Bai Xiaochun stood there in the crowd, musing that Zhou Xingqi definitely deserved to be Chosen. Her words just now had been marvelously spoken. He looked up for a moment in thought. He could clearly hear the haughtiness in her words, and what caused him to sigh the most was not that he didn't want to reveal himself. No, it was the killing intent flickering in the eyes of her adoring fans.

Zhou Xinqi's expression was calm as she coolly addressed the crowd as a whole. "Ladies and gentlemen, I came here for another reason today, and I hope I can have the support of each and every one of you."

Her words instantly got everyone excited, and everyone waited respectfully to see what she had to say next.

"The tranquility of Fragrant Cloud Peak has been disturbed of late. My Master, Li Qinghou, has had quite a few Spirit Tail Chickens go missing. He is currently out of the sect, and most likely doesn't care too much about the matter. However, as his apprentice, I have a responsibility to do something about it. I sincerely hope that all my fellow disciples will work hard to catch this chicken thief. If anyone manages to apprehend him, I will

personally reward that person with a treasured jade pendant!" Even as she spoke, Zhou Xinqi pulled out a green jade pendant from inside her robe. It let off a gentle glow that made it obvious it was an extraordinary item.

"This is an item I came across some years ago that contains potent defensive power." As her voice echoed out, the numerous Outer Sect disciples looked at the jade pendant, and excited expressions could be seen on many of their faces. Some even began to call out various promises.

"Don't worry, Elder Sister Zhou. That chicken thief won't have a place to hide!

"How dare he steal the Peak Lord's chickens! This chicken thief is daring to the extreme. We'll definitely be paying close attention to the matter!" Soon, almost everyone in the crowd had cried out assurances that they would help, especially Zhou Xinqi's fans, whose eyes burned passionately as they cried out louder than everyone else.

Bai Xiaochun stood in the middle of the crowd, somewhat stunned. The surrounding disciples were getting worked up into a frenzy, and he felt like a cold wind was blowing down his spine.

However, he still wasn't willing to give up. Even just thinking about the hunger caused from cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique caused sweat to bead up on his forehead. His mind raced as he tried to come up with ideas, and a moment later, his eyes lit up. Suddenly, he slapped his chest and projected his voice through the crowd.

“Elder Sister Zhou, I, Bai Xiaochun, will definitely accomplish this mission, even if I have to climb a mountain of blades or swim to the bottom of a vat of boiling oil. I will catch this chicken thief!” His piercing voice couldn’t be missed, and as he spoke, he shouldered his way forward to stand at the front of the crowd.

The way he made his entrance caused numerous eyes to fall upon him, as did the way he loudly slapped his own chest. Even Zhou Xinqi’s fans felt a bit overwhelmed, and Zhou Xinqi herself couldn’t help but look over at him.

Seeing how much her fellow disciples supported her caused a smile to break out on Zhou Xinqi’s face. She nodded slightly, and was just turning to leave when all of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun’s piercing voice once again weighed down onto the crowd.

“Elder Sister Zhou, I have a suggestion. Why don’t we form a chicken thief task force? If we work together, it will make it much easier to catch this vile traitor, and protect the Peak Lord’s Spirit Tail Chickens!” From the righteous tone of Bai Xiaochun’s voice, it seemed that he was willing to spare no effort to accomplish the mission set forth by Elder Sister Zhou.

Zhou Xinqi stared in shock. As for the rest of the crowd, quite a few of them thought it was a good idea and began to voice their approval.

“Good idea,” someone said. “However, cultivation is still our main priority, so the matter must be voluntary.” Zhou Xinqi

looked over at Bai Xiaochun once more. In her opinion, this Junior Brother of hers was not only fair and pure, he seemed inherently charming. Furthermore, he appeared to be piously devoted to her, which left her with a very favorable impression. Nodding, she gave him a smile.

“Since the idea was put forth by this zealous Junior Brother, I suggest that he form the chicken thief task force. Take these ten silk bands to use as tokens of identification for the task force members.” With that, she produced ten bands of blue silk from within her bag of holding. With the wave of a hand, she sent them flying toward Bai Xiaochun, where they landed in his hand.

“Don’t worry, Elder Sister, I’ll handle everything!” He stood there with silk bands in hand, looking prouder than ever. In fact, he looked like he would yield to no one when it came to the Peak Lord’s chickens, and would even be willing to sacrifice his life for the cause.

Zhou Xinqi’s eyes glowed with admiration, and she couldn’t help but muse that there were very few responsible Junior Brothers like this in the sect. Taking one last look at Bai Xiaochun’s charming appearance, she turned and left.

Zhou Xinqi’s fans were not happy to suddenly see her and Bai Xiaochun on good terms. Furthermore, they also regretted not winning her favor in such a fawning way themselves.

After Zhou Xinqi left, the disciples from the spirit fowl farm also left, thanking the crowd profusely in the process. They especially expressed thanks to Bai Xiaochun, who stood there, chest puffed

up as he cursed the chicken thief. Then, he organized the chicken thief task force, filling it with other disciples whose cultivation bases did not exceed his.

Finally, Bai Xiaochun hurried away, wiping the sweat from his brow. Sighing, he thought,

“That was a close one. I almost lost access to my food source. It’s a good thing you’re so clever and quick-witted, Bai Xiaochun. Heh heh.” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun felt very pleased with himself. Humming a little tune, he headed once again in the direction of his courtyard residence. Back in the courtyard, the Spiritwinter Bamboo in the spirit field was growing frighteningly high. It was now three meters high, thicker than his calf, and shocking in appearance.

That night, when dark clouds filled the sky and everything was pitch black, Bai Xiaochun sat there with his eyes wide open, licking his lips.

“The night is dark, and I’m feeling hungry yet again....”

Zhou Xingqi





## Chapter 23: The Chicken-Thieving Fiend

---

It was late at night, and Fragrant Cloud Peak was blanketed in darkness. If you held your hand out in front of you, you wouldn't even be able to see your fingers. Other than the whispering wind, everything was peaceful and quiet. Not even a peep could be heard coming from the birds and beasts.

Bai Xiaochun hurried through the darkness, Zhou Xinqi's silk bank tied around his arm, following the path that led to one of the Spirit Tail Chicken farms. As he sped along, he would occasionally duck into a nearby thicket and proceed along in concealment.

Soon, the Spirit Tail Chicken farm came into view up ahead. Most of the chickens were asleep, although a few were walking about to and fro. There was even one chicken in particular which was strolling in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

He crouched there in the thicket, licking his lips until the Spirit Tail Chicken neared the fence. Just as he was pulling out his bamboo cicada, his heart flip-flopped, and a look of vigilance filled his eyes.

At the same time, shouting could be heard from behind him as numerous figures charged toward him through the night. They even had flame globes which cast radiant light out into the night.

“Damned chicken thief! Finally you show your face!”

“We've been waiting for you here for days! Now we've got you

surrounded, let's see how you try to escape!" As the cries echoed out, eight figures closed in on Bai Xiaochun, completely surrounding him.

These were the disciples in charge of taking care of the chickens. Even after days of painstakingly laying in wait, they had never imagined that today would be the day when everything paid off. Their hearts were filled with righteous ardor as they prepared to immediately execute justice upon the chicken thief.

When their words rang out, Bai Xiaochun looked shocked at first. But then he looked up in thought for a moment and let out a cold snort.

"Shut up, you people!" he said. "Keep it down!" His words were spoken without the slightest politeness, as if justice were on his side. He did nothing to attempt to flee, but instead, arrogantly rose to his feet, making sure that the silk band on his arm was clearly visible.

"See that?!" he asked. "I'm the captain of the chicken thief task force." Brow furrowed, he looked around at the eight disciples, clearly displeased.

This sudden development caused the eight interlopers to stare in shock. Some of these disciples had seen Bai Xiaochun earlier in the day. After examining him a bit closer, they started to hesitate.

One of the disciples seemed a bit skeptical about the situation. "Oh, it's Junior Brother Bai. Well... what are you doing here so late

at night, huh?”

His words caused the other disciples to stare suspiciously at Bai Xiaochun.

Flicking his sleeve and frowning, Bai Xiaochun angrily said, “Elder Sister Zhou herself asked me to be the captain of the chicken thief task force, so of course I’ll do everything in my power to catch the chicken thief. I’ve even given up my nightly cultivation routine to come here and lay in wait. However, considering how much of a racket you people are making, I’m sure the chicken thief has long since fled.” He really did look like the picture of someone trying to catch a thief.

The chicken farm disciples exchanged dismayed glances, and some of them even looked a bit embarrassed. As for the most suspicious of the disciples, his expression softened a bit, although he still didn’t seem totally convinced.

Seeing that their suspicions hadn’t been completely dispelled, Bai Xiaochun gave a cold harrumph and, before anyone could ask any more questions, he decided to seize the initiative and put the onus on them.

“No wonder you people have lost so many Spirit Tail Chickens! You’re completely negligent. Look over there, your fence is even broken!” He pointed over to a spot where there really was a hole in the fence, although it wasn’t very obvious. It had actually been punched into the fence by a struggling Spirit Tail Chicken that he had been in the process of stealing a while back.

The chicken farm disciples looked in the direction that Bai Xiaochun was pointing, and when they saw the hole, expressions of shock appeared on their faces. It was true that they really hadn't paid much attention to tiny details like this in the past.

“And look at that Spirit Tail Chicken. How did you plan to protect it after it walked all the way over here!?” Bai Xiaochun seemed to be getting more and more angry, and was even raising his voice, causing the chicken farm disciples' faces to flush with shame.

“According to my investigation, this spot right here is the most remote location on the chicken farm. You should be guarding this place especially closely. But look, I was here for ages before any of you people showed up.” The more Bai Xiaochun talked, the angrier he got. In the end, he let out a long sigh.

“How do you people expect to catch a thief like this, huh? Based on my experience catching thieves, if my speculations are correct, then this is the location in which the most chickens were taken.” As soon as the words left his mouth, the chicken farm disciples began to tremble inwardly. Exchanging glances, they saw the shock in each others' eyes. Based on the information they had, this was indeed the location where they had lost the most chickens.

In fact, that was the reason why they had decided to stand guard here. Bai Xiaochun had hit the nail square on the head, causing the entire group to look at him with increasing admiration.

Even the disciple who had been the most suspicious of him now felt that he had been in the wrong. First he thought about how Bai Xiaochun had sacrificed his cultivation time to come catch the thief, and then he remembered how enthusiastic and duty-bound he had seemed earlier in the day. Finally, the disciple took a deep breath, clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Junior Brother Bai, please do not be too deeply offended at what I said earlier. Many thanks for your sacrifice. We will repair this spot immediately, and will definitely increase the guard in this area!”

Everyone else clasped hands as well, thinking about how rare it was to find someone as zealous as Bai Xiaochun. He was obviously trying to help them, and that made them even more sorry for their impulsiveness earlier.

Bai Xiaochun sighed, then earnestly offered them a few more pieces of advice before turning to leave. As he walked off, the eight disciples once again clasped hands and bowed, completely moved by what he had just done.

“Junior Brother Bai is such a good guy.”

As soon as Bai Xiaochun was out of sight, a cold wind brushed against his back, and he realized that he was sweating profusely from how close of a call it had been. However, his stomach was still grumbling, so he decided to go to the other two chicken farms to see if there was still a chance to make a move.

He strolled down the mountain path, looking around cautiously as he went along to make sure he wasn't being followed. His expression was grave as he pondered how to go about stealing a chicken from the next chicken farm. As the wind blew, it fluttered the silk band tied around his arm.

Meanwhile, up in dark night air, a woman stood on a blue flying silk, completely undetectable to everyone down below as she examined the situation on this part of Fragrant Cloud Peak. Suddenly, her expression flickered as she caught sight of Bai Xiaochun walking along, looking around vigilantly. Her eyes gradually began to glow with praise.

"This little Junior Brother really takes his responsibilities seriously." Naturally, that woman was Zhou Xinqi, who had been inspecting the area. Earlier, there had been lots of disciples on patrol, but as the night wore on, most of them had gone back to practice cultivation. Bai Xiaochun was the only one out and about actually trying to catch the thief.

"With him around, the chicken thief will definitely have to reign things in." Zhou Xinqi looked away and then headed back to her Immortal's cave, feeling much better about the situation.

Two hours later, Bai Xiaochun had circled back around to his courtyard residence. Once inside, he slapped his bag of holding to produce two Spirit Tail Chickens. Chuckling to himself, he plucked them and tossed them into the wok, soon after which, a fragrant aroma filled the air, causing him to salivate. Then, he didn't even wait for them to cool before wolfing them down ravenously.

Finally, he burped, patted his belly, and then laid back, looking so content he almost seemed drunk.

Another month passed, during which time Bai Xiaochun conscientiously went out at night, looking very solemn as he appeared randomly to inspect the various chicken farms.

Despite that, the chickens still continued to go missing. They seemingly disappeared without a trace, which was a deep mystery. The chicken farm disciples were increasingly feeling as if they had lost all face. Filled with passion, they continuously swore oaths to not give up until the chicken thief was incarcerated.

Bai Xiaochun seemed to be taking things even more seriously than them. He was completely devoted to defending the chicken farms, as if he wasn't even willing to rest until the thief was apprehended. There was even one occasion in which he stood guard at one chicken farm for four days and four nights.

The hard work being put in seemed to put a lot of pressure on the chicken thief, and the rate of thievery seemed to have been reduced. However, the thief didn't disappear altogether. Eventually, nearly half of the Spirit Tail Chickens on Fragrant Cloud Peak were now gone, and the ones left behind were mostly juveniles.

In the end, even the chicken farm disciples began berating themselves, and couldn't help but sigh emotionally. They were of the opinion that if the rest of the chicken thief task force was as conscientious as Junior Brother Bai, then the chicken thief would definitely have been caught already.



Zhou Xinqi was getting particularly anxious. One afternoon when Bai Xiaochun was sitting cross-legged at one of the chicken farms, looking around vigilantly, a blue flying silk descended from above, upon which was Zhou Xinqi.

After seeing who it was, Bai Xiaochun charmingly called out, “Elder Sister Zhou.”

When Zhou Xinqi’s beautiful eyes fell upon Bai Xiaochun, she smiled and said, “Hard at work, I see, Junior Brother Bai.”

Soon, other disciples in the area were rushing up, clustering around Zhou Xinqi and also Bai Xiaochun.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I offer my profound thanks for your assistance recently,” she said softly. “I am truly grateful. However, the chicken thief is still as brazen as ever. Therefore, I will join you to stand guard.” After looking around at the group, she frowned slightly and continued, “I’m wondering if perhaps the chicken thief has a connection to my Master. Otherwise, wouldn’t he steal Spirit Tail Chicken from the other mountain peaks too? Instead, he seems to be targeting only my Master’s chickens!”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, his eyes began to shine brightly, and he very nearly slapped his thigh. What Zhou Xinqi said made a lot of sense, and as he thought about it, he couldn’t help but look off in the direction of Violet Cauldron Peak. Slowly, his eyes narrowed to cover over the wily glint deep therein.

Now that Zhou Xinqi had shown herself, many of her admirers also began to flock to the area. Soon, vast crowds had gathered at Fragrant Cloud Peak's Spirit Tail Chicken farms.

The chicken thief was now incapable of doing anything, and in the following days, not a single Spirit Tail Chicken was lost.

Even still, the mysterious and unfathomable chicken thief was already completely famous. In fact, many people had taken to calling him the Chicken-Thieving Fiend. He had caused such a stir among the disciples that he was considered to stand alongside the owner of the little turtle as one of the most mysterious figures on Fragrant Cloud Peak. In fact, even the Outer Sect disciples on Green Crest Peak and Violet Cauldron Peak had heard about him.

Now that the chicken thief had apparently vanished, Zhou Xinqi felt a lot better. Although he had never been apprehended, when she thought about how hard Bai Xiaochun had worked over the past month or more, she ended up rewarding him with the jade pendant anyway, as a form of encouragement.

When the matter finally came to an end, Bai Xiaochun's earnestness and devotion had caused quite a few fellow Outer Sect disciples to notice how pure, charming, and dedicated he was.

## Chapter 24: Who Are You?

---

Bai Xiaochun sat in his courtyard on Fragrant Cloud Peak, looking at the jade pendant sitting there in his hand. After activating it with some spiritual energy, the pendant began to glow with a soft, green light that surrounded his body.

Next, he performed an incantation gesture with his left hand, causing his wooden sword to appear. It circled around in the air and then shot back toward Bai Xiaochun. However, as soon as it hit the green light, it was as if it had suddenly run into a patch of water, causing it to slow down significantly.

“What a treasure!” he murmured, putting the wooden sword away and clasping the jade pendant in his hand, feeling a little embarrassed.

“Ah well, it doesn’t matter. Li Qinghou is Zhou Xinqi’s Master, but he’s my mentor too. In fact, considering our relationship, I should probably call him Uncle.” Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun put the jade pendant away, then stood up and stretched lazily.

After eating more than half of Li Qinghou’s chickens, his Undying Live Forever Technique was progressing by leaps and bounds. It was now more than seventy percent complete. Of course, the Spirit Tail Chickens replenished his vital energy, not his spiritual energy. However, even though his cultivation base was still at the fourth level of Qi Condensation, it had made some progress, and was more refined than before.

He buried all the chicken bones in the spirit soil, which was now filled with so much spiritual energy that it bordered on ridiculous. As for his Spiritwinter Bamboo, it was now more than two meters tall, and no longer purely emerald green; dark dots had begun to appear within the green.

Most important of all were the Spirit Tails, which could produce three-colored flames. Bai Xiaochun had been collecting them, and now had several hundred. Whenever he thought about the three-colored flames that the Spirit Tails could produce, his heart filled with anticipation.

“I’m in no hurry with my cultivation base. As long as I can get enough medicinal pills, I can do a threefold spirit enhancement on them and advance with flying speed. The most important thing to do is make some progress with my Undying Skin!” Almost as soon as the thought entered his mind, Bai Xiaochun’s stomach started to grumble. At first he looked in the direction of Fragrant Cloud Peak’s chicken farms, but then he turned toward Violet Cauldron Peak.

“Eldest Brother is on Violet Cauldron Peak, I wonder how he’s been doing lately.” Thinking about all the things that had happened back in the Ovens, he raced out of his courtyard, down the mountain, and toward Violet Cauldron Peak.

Of the three mountains on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect, Green Crest Peak focused on swords, Fragrant Cloud Peak concentrated on spirit medicine, and Violet Cauldron Peak excelled in magical techniques and spirit enhancement. Furthermore, the south bank’s most fundamental technique, the Violet Qi Cauldron

Control Art, actually came from Violet Cauldron Peak.

Bai Xiaochun walked along the path toward Violet Cauldron Peak, and by the time he got there, evening was falling. He looked up at the mountain, which was wreathed in clouds and mist. High up in the air, he was just barely able to make out tiny shadows flitting around in beams of prismatic light. He sighed.

“I wonder when I’ll be able to get some kind of flying treasure, and then do something like that. Then my world will really open up, and I’ll actually be on the path to living forever.” Eyes gleaming with anticipation, he began to ascend Violet Cauldron Peak.

Although he wasn’t a disciple of Violet Cauldron Peak, as an Outer Sect disciple, he was qualified to go to any of the various mountains. As he walked along, he asked some people about where Zhang Dahai lived. Thanks to his charming manner, he almost immediately got an answer, and quickly hurried off in the direction indicated.

Big Fatty Zhang’s residence was located on a different part of the mountain compared to the location of Bai Xiaochun’s place on Fragrant Cloud Peak. It was on the sunny side of the mountain, where there was stronger spiritual energy. There weren’t many residences here; they were sprinkled about like stars in the night sky, apparently in some prescribed pattern.

Although it was evening, and the light wasn’t very clear, it was still possible to see the swirling mists and abundant spirit plants, all of which gave the place a celestial feeling.

Taking a deep breath, Bai Xiaochun looked around enviously. “Eldest Brother really does have connections in the sect. I can’t believe he got a place like this. It’s way better than mine.”

It only took a bit of looking to find Big Fatty Zhang’s residence. The courtyard was filled with weeds, as if no one had tended to it for ages. Bai Xiaochun gaped in shock, then knocked on the main gate. However, there was no response.

“Am I in the wrong place?” he thought. Even as he stood there, shocked, the front door of the building inside the courtyard slowly creaked open, and an emaciated figure appeared, holding a flying sword in his right hand. Dim silver light flickered around his left hand as he trudged out. Looking exhausted, then languidly said, “Who is it?!”

Even as the word left the man’s mouth, he suddenly saw Bai Xiaochun standing there across the courtyard, and a tremor ran through him. A look of delight appeared on his face, almost as if he had just caught sight of a blood relative. Suddenly, he flew forward, pushed the main gate open, and then stood there looking at Bai Xiaochun. Then he laughed loudly and said, “Ninth Junior Brother!”

“Who are you?!” Bai Xiaochun responded, backing up, his eyes wide. Although this person seemed familiar for some reason, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t identify him at all.

He had average features, and was very skinny. Although couldn’t

be described as being only skin and bones, he was almost to that point. His eyes shone with vigor, and yet were sunken in. From the ripples of his cultivation base, he seemed to be in the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation.

When the emaciated young man saw Bai Xiaochun's expression, he looked like he was about to start crying.

"Ninth Fatty, it's me, Big Fatty!" he said. Face filled with intense grief, he went on to say, "Ninth Fatty, you have no idea how how much I've suffered during the past year. My master is so demanding! As soon as I got here, he told me he doesn't like fatties, and that I had to go hungry for half a year!"

"Half a year, Ninth Fatty! Do you know what I ended up looking like after half a year? It took me forever just to gain this much weight back." This emaciated young man was none other than Big Fatty Zhang, who was now standing there weeping.

Bai Xiaochun looked him over carefully. Having heard the story, and confirmed that he really was his Eldest Brother, Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped. The Eldest Brother he remembered, and this person standing in front of him, looked like two completely different people.

"Is there some grudge between you and your Master?" Bai Xiaochun asked sympathetically.

"That old shrew! I...." Big Fatty Zhang said a few words, but then shivered and didn't dare to continue. Pulling Bai Xiaochun into his

courtyard, he said, “Ninth Junior Brother, I miss the Ovens! Nobody can survive in a place like this. I’ve never been full the entire time I’ve been here, plus there’s no way for me to make any money. Ah, I’m so hungry!” He then proceeded to tell Bai Xiaochun everything that had happened to him from the moment he had arrived.

As Bai Xiaochun listened to the bitter tale, he suddenly realized that his decision to start stealing chickens was definitely the right thing to do. He looked at Big Fatty Zhang’s emaciated frame, then sighed and patted his bony shoulder.

“Since you’re in some trouble, Elder Brother, then Junior Brother will naturally help. Just wait here for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. I’ll be right back.” Big Fatty Zhang gaped in shock as Bai Xiaochun turned and left the courtyard.

On his way up the mountain, Bai Xiaochun had already taken note of where Violet Cauldron Peak’s Spirit Tail Chicken farms were located. Taking advantage of the darkness of night, he suddenly vanished.

Big Fatty Zhang had no idea what was going on, nor any clue as to what Bai Xiaochun might be doing. He waited there at his front gate for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, after which Big Fatty Zhang returned, carrying a Spirit Tail Chicken in each hand.

When Big Fatty Zhang saw the Spirit Tail Chickens, his eyes went wide. Before he could say anything, though, Bai Xiaochun hustled him into the courtyard. Ignoring Big Fatty Zhang, Bai Xiaochun expertly produced a wok, boiled some water, plucked the chickens



and tossed them in. With that, he dusted off his sleeves, lifted his chin and looked at Big Fatty Zhang.

Big Fatty Zhang was panting, and his eyes were wide. He pointed at the chickens in the wok, and then back at Bai Xiaochun, and a look of disbelief crept up on his face.

“Y-you... don’t tell me that you are the Chicken-Thieving Fiend of Fragrant Cloud Peak!?!?”

Bai Xiaochun chuckled. Then, as if he were very familiar with the process, placed his hand onto the wok and sent out some spiritual energy to ensure that the chicken meat was perfectly tender. Soon, a fragrant aroma wafted out. Bai Xiaochun reached in, pulled out a chicken leg, and then handed it to Big Fatty Zhang.

“Eat!” he said, imitating the way Big Fatty Zhang had handed him the magical mushroom back when he had first joined the Ovens.

Big Fatty Zhang swallowed a few times as he stared at the chicken leg. Finally, he grabbed it and wolfed it down. From that point on, it wasn’t necessary for Bai Xiaochun to say anything. Big Fatty Zhang flew over to the wok and virtually dunked his face in. The two chickens were rapidly consumed down to the bones, except that he couldn’t stop there; crunching sounds could be heard as he chomped them down too.

Finally, he smacked his belly, and laid back, looking nearly drunk with contentment. Then he and Bai Xiaochun exchanged a look

and started laughing.

“Ninth Fatty, you’re incredible,” he said, looking very proud. “You really were paying attention back in the Ovens. I never would have imagined that Fragrant Cloud Peak’s illustrious Chicken-Thieving Fiend would turn out to be my bro.”

“Cultivation is innately a Heaven-defying thing. As cultivators, it’s only natural to contend with the Heavens, and fight with men. You have to rely on yourself! What do a few Spirit Tail Chickens count for?” Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, but was unable to conceal how pleased he was with himself. He had been keeping his identity a secret for far too long now; being able to share it, and then see the look on Big Fatty Zhang’s face, made him feel wonderful.

“The true pity is that I’ve eaten so many Spirit Tail Chickens on Fragrant Cloud Peak that only the chicks are left. They don’t taste very good, otherwise I’d invite you to live with me over there, and we could eat our fill every day. You would definitely gain all your weight back.” Bai Xiaochun sighed.

When Big Fatty Zhang heard that, his eyes gleamed, and he immediately crawled to his feet.

“Violet Cauldron Peak has them too. The west, south, and north faces of the mountains all do. They’re guarded by two shifts a day, each shift manned by seven disciples!” Big Fatty Zhang went on to explain in further detail. When he was finished, he found Bai Xiaochun looking at him with a strange expression. Big Fatty Zhang cleared his throat and said, “After I heard about the

Chicken-Thieving Fiend, I decided to try to do the same thing as him. Unfortunately, the chickens are too hard to steal. As soon as you get close, they start making noise. Not only did I not even come close to stealing a chicken, I almost got caught.” Big Fatty Zhang seemed a bit embarrassed about the whole thing.

Bai Xiaochun laughed, then edged closer to Big Fatty Zhang and began to whisper something. Gradually, Big Fatty Zhang’s eyes began to glow brighter and brighter, and he was even panting. Then Bai Xiaochun pulled out his bamboo cicada, and after a moment wide smiles covered their faces and they began to chuckle.

Soon, laughter rang out from within the courtyard, and it sounded terrifying.

From that day on, Bai Xiaochun began to visit Big Fatty Zhang more often, and gradually, the Spirit Tail Chickens from Violet Cauldron Peak began to go missing....

Every night, two great chicken bandits struck. One did the stealing, the other stood watch. Soon, the disciples of Violet Cauldron Peak were in an uproar, and everyone was discussing the matter.

“Did you hear? The Chicken-Thieving Fiend from Fragrant Cloud Peak has set his eyes on Violet Cauldron Peak!”

“I actually saw it happen! The Chicken-Thieving Fiend isn’t a person, it’s a team of two!”

When the news got back to Fragrant Cloud Peak, the Outer Sect disciples there all took deep breaths and looked sympathetically in the direction of Violet Cauldron Peak.

“So the Chicken-Thieving Fiend has learned to be balanced. He’s finally not stealing chickens from our Fragrant Cloud Peak....”

## Chapter 25: Invincible Iron Skin!

---

It got to the point that, a month later, the rumors were flying like crazy. Even the Xu Meixiang, the Peak Lord of Violet Cauldron Peak, who was none other than the old shrew Big Fatty Zhang had mentioned, caught wind of what was happening. Bai Xiaochun and Big Fatty Zhang had no choice but to cease their activities. After discussing the matter together, they decided to go rescue Third Girly Hei.

Therefore, the two of them went to Green Crest Peak.

Third Girly Hei was a bit thinner, but not conspicuously. However, she now emanated a somewhat seductive air, which left Bai Xiaochun and Big Fatty Zhang virtually speechless. They barely even recognized her. Her previously swarthy face even looked somewhat elegant. One could easily imagine how, if she continued to lose weight, she would eventually turn into a true beauty.

However, once she heard about the Spirit Tail Chickens, here eyes began to shine.

From then on, the Spirit Tail Chickens on Green Crest Peak began to go missing....

By now, the Chicken-Thieving Fiend was completely famous on the south bank. It was virtually impossible to find an Outer Sect disciple who hadn't heard of him, and even the servants knew the name.

Before long, the Elders took note of the matter. Although the Chicken-Thieving Fiend eventually vanished without a trace, never to reappear again, Third Girly Hei and Big Fatty Zhang both visibly regained a lot of weight. Although they weren't as impressive as they had been in the past, they were still much sturdier.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he finally... finished eighty-one cycles, at long last sating his hunger. It was at that point that the three of them gave up on stealing chickens.

Although the eighty-one cycles of the Undying Live Forever Technique hadn't been performed in succession, but rather built up over time, the result was absolutely the same.

One one particular day, Bai Xiaochun sat in his courtyard in Fragrant Cloud Peak, his expression solemn. His skin was emanating iron-colored pulses, and even glowed with a flickering black light. An incredible aura radiated off of him, making him seem savage and wild.

He had endured eighty-one days of pain and then eighty-one days of hunger. That combination transformed into a shocking power that erupted up inside of Bai Xiaochun, over and over again.

Each eruption was filled with boundless vital energy, which then poured into Bai Xiaochun's skin, causing it to become increasingly iron-colored. The black glow grew more blinding, and the toughness of his skin increased exponentially.

Eventually, it reached the point that if anyone had happened to catch sight of him standing there, they would think they were looking at an iron statue, and not a flesh and blood human.

His mind was reeling as the bursts of energy continued. After the 19th time, he realized that they weren't slowing down at all, but were actually increasing in intensity.

Bai Xiaochun didn't move a muscle, and didn't even seem to be breathing. However, if you looked closely, you would see that all of the pores on his body were dilated as he silently absorbed the energy of Heaven and Earth in the area.

"After eighty-one eruptions, my Undying Skin will reach the initial stage of completion, and I'll be in the Iron Skin stage!" The Undying Live Forever Technique's mnemonic floated in Bai Xiaochun's mind, and a firm and unswerving expression could be seen on his face. All of his hard work over the past year, including enduring all the pain and hunger... had all been for this moment!

RUMBLE!

The vital energy inside of him erupted out once more, and the iron color of his skin deepened. Every time the vital energy poured into the flesh of his skin, it was as if it were being tempered by the strikes of thousands of forge hammers.

As of this moment, he pulsed with energy, like a divine weapon in the forging process!

RUUUUMMMMBLLE!

28 times. 30 times. 40 times. 48 times.....

Time passed. Three days later, Bai Xiaochun remained in the exact same spot. Although no bystander would be able to hear anything, to him, it sounded like endless thunder was booming in his ears.

However, it was at this point that the vital energy inside of him erupted out for the 49th time. Suddenly, the power redoubled, and a tremor ran through him. At the same time, tiny cracks began to appear on his skin, as if it couldn't endure any longer.

Although the cracks were few, as soon as they appeared, Bai Xiaochun's heart sank.

“So, the signs of impending death have finally appeared....” Bai Xiaochun frowned. The introduction to the Undying Live Forever Technique mentioned cracks like this. During the process of reaching the initial stage of success, they were guaranteed to show up. How long each individual could hold on would depend on their willpower, and would end up determining the quality of the future Undying Skin.

Even if you didn't endure for very long at all, you could still successfully cultivate the Undying Skin. However, the quality would naturally fall short of perfect.



If you could hold on through all 81 eruptions of vital energy, then you could reach a state of perfect flawlessness.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes gleamed with determination for a moment before he closed them once more. Rumbling explosions continued to erupt inside of him. 50 times. 60 times. 70 times.... Unexpectedly, one breath took him through five whole days, during which he endured all the way past 70.

The cracks covering him were so numerous that his skin almost looked like a turtle's. In many places, the cracks had joined together, making him resemble a broken flower vase that had been pieced back together.

He looked like he might shatter at any moment.

“Only seven more times!” he thought, his eyes completely bloodshot. Panting, he clenched his jaw, and that vicious streak in his personality surged to life.

**74 times!**

**77 times!**

**79 times!**

Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and roared, although it wasn't

very loud of a roar, more like a muffled grunt. His body trembled as he endured yet another eruption, reaching a total of 80.

The vital energy poured into his skin which, although it was covered with cracks, was like iron; anyone who saw it would surely be shocked.

“Last one!” he said. As the final burst of vital energy surged out, he suddenly extended his right hand and smashed it down toward the ground.

A boom rang out, and a huge crater appeared. The final blast of vital energy erupted as everything reached a conclusion. Endless amounts of vital energy poured into his skin, causing the cracks to immediately vanish, leaving him looking sleek and smooth. The black glow vanished, and he looked just as fair and pure as before. However, now his skin was far tougher than ordinary skin, although nobody could tell that by looking at him.

Bai Xiaochun stood there panting for a moment before looking up at the crater he had just blasted into the ground. Then he looked at his skin, and his expression brightened. Finally, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

He waved his right hand, causing his wooden sword to fly out, which then transformed into a black beam that slashed at his forearm. As soon as it hit, a metallic clang rang out, and the wooden sword unexpectedly flew backward. As for his arm, it felt almost like a mosquito had bitten him. When he examined the point of impact, his skin wasn't harmed at all.

“Undying Skin!” he cried, unable to contain his joy. It must be stated that his wooden sword was no ordinary magical item; it had received a twofold spirit enhancement. Although it was made from ordinary materials, because of the spirit enhancement, it could be considered a magical item worthy of a Chosen. Despite that, though, it hadn’t hurt him at all.

Bai Xiaochun suddenly flickered into motion, shooting forward. A buzzing sound could be heard as he suddenly appeared more than thirty meters away. He could now move many times faster than before, leaving him completely delighted.

As for the power he could unleash, a mere look at the crater in the ground revealed that it was also many times greater than before. Furthermore, this was only the initial stage of success of the Undying Skin. Although it couldn’t be said that he had completely cast off his mortal body, he was definitely vastly different than before.

“With defensive power like this,” he thought, Bai Xiaochun is going to be much safer on his path to living forever.” Bai Xiaochun was extremely pleased with himself. Next, he examined his cultivation base and saw that he had also made quite a bit of progress in that aspect as well. He was now in the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation.

Furthermore, it was not the ordinary great circle. Because of how the spiritual energy had been compressed inside of him, it’s quality was far beyond compare to an ordinary cultivator of the same stage as himself.

Feeling very satisfied, he sped a few laps around the courtyard, then suddenly stopped, eyes gleaming. Lifting his right hand out in front of him, he held his thumb and forefinger out in a U shape. Then he pinched them together, causing a black glow to appear on them. Although nothing happened, cracking sounds could be heard in the air up ahead of him.

Eyes widening, he turned and dashed over to a nearby rock, where he once again caused the black light to flash from his two fingers. As soon as he pinched the fingers together, cracking sounds could be heard as the rock exploded like a piece of tofu.

He flickered into motion again, appeared next to the Spiritwinter Bamboo, which was now more than nine meters tall. After identifying the toughest of the bamboo stalks, he pinched his fingers together. A boom could be heard as the bamboo shattered.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and sank down to the ground, where he looked down at his two fingers, and the black glow which was slowly fading away from them. After a bit of time passed, he let out a long breath.

“So, that’s the Throat Crushing Grasp, huh...?” he murmured quietly. That was one of the secret magics of the Undying Live Forever Technique, something that could only be unleashed after reaching the first stage of initial success. Supposedly, it could double one’s power, and could not be countered.

Just now, Bai Xiaochun had only used about fifty percent of his

full power. He couldn't even imagine how powerful and terrifying the secret magic would be if he unleashed its full power.

From what Bai Xiaochun could tell, a secret magic like that should be used for killing people. After a moment of silent thought, he came to the conclusion that although it was brutal, he still needed to practice it in earnest. Therefore, he began to zip back and forth in his courtyard, causing a black flashing light and cracking sounds to echo out.

Time passed. In the blink of an eye, half a month went by. During that time, Bai Xiaochun never left his courtyard. He stayed there practicing the entire time. Naturally, he had no way of knowing that after months of being away, Li Qinghou had finally returned to the Spirit Stream Sect, and was currently flying through the air atop a beam of green light, heading directly toward Fragrant Cloud Peak.

After he landed, and before he could even rest, two beams of light shot out from Green Crest Peak and Violet Cauldron Peak and headed in his direction. Soon, he could make out the figure of an old man in one of the beams of light. He looked like a sharp, unsheathed sword, and emanated the unique pressure of a Foundation Establishment cultivator.

In the other beam of light was graceful woman. She looked like a natural beauty, exquisite despite the strange expression on her face. It almost looked like she didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Together with the old man, she alighted on the mountain peak.

These two were the Peak Lords of Green Crest Peak and Violet

Cauldron Peak respectively. After arriving at Fragrant Cloud Peak, they had a private discussion with Li Qinghou, then left.

Li Qinghou stood atop Fragrant Cloud Peak, rubbing the bridge of his nose. Finally, he sent out some divine sense, focusing it on the three Spirit Tail Chicken farms in their various locations on the mountain. When he saw that the only things left were chicks, he similarly looked like he didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Sighing, he waved his sleeve and began to walk down the mountain. From the direction he took...

It seemed he was heading directly toward Bai Xiaochun's courtyard residence.

## Chapter 26: How Were The Spirit Tail Chickens?

---

Li Qinghou had actually never been to the area where Bai Xiaochun's residence was located. After all, it was in a somewhat remote part of the mountain. As he proceeded along, the courtyard residence soon became visible off in the distance.

However, before he could get very close, a fair, clear-faced figure appeared, holding a piece of roasted meat in his hand, walking and eating at the same time. He seemed to be engrossed in his eating, and was even humming a little tune.

Li Qinghou's face darkened as he realized that the meat currently being stuffed into Bai Xiaochun's mouth was definitely a chicken leg. Anger instantly flared up in his heart.

"Bai Xiaochun!!" he roared, his voice booming out like thunder. Bai Xiaochun, who was in the middle of sucking on the chicken bone, very nearly jumped up into the air in fright.

"Peak Lord Li!" he gasped, his eyes widening. Without even thinking about it, he stuffed the entire chicken bone into his mouth, then vigorously crunched it to pieces and swallowed it down, his face turning a deep purple in the process.

In the entire sect, the person he feared the most was Li Qinghou, which was especially true after having eaten so many of his chickens. Bai Xiaochun actually felt a little bit guilty. Wiping the sweat from his brow, he hurried over, looking extremely charming

and also very sincere as he clasped hands and bowed in greeting.

“Disciple offers greetings, Peak Lord.”

Li Qinghou looked at Bai Xiaochun, his face completely expressionless. Inwardly, he felt a bit torn. Bai Xiaochun’s ancestor had truly shown him a great kindness, and Li Qinghou was the type of person who valued such things deeply. Despite what Bai Xiaochun had obviously done, he couldn’t forget about what had happened all those years ago.

The Peak Lords from Green Crest Peak and Violet Cauldron Peak had come to speak with him about the matter of the Spirit Tail Chickens. Although the chickens weren’t necessarily very expensive, Li Qinghou couldn’t allow other people to criticize his own disciple, so he compensated them with several times more than the chickens’ actual value.

Now, he looked at Bai Xiaochun, feeling even more irritated than ever at how he wasn’t living up to expectations.

Li Qinghou snorted and then said, “You’ve been an Outer Sect disciple for a little more than half a year, but your cultivation base has only progressed from the third level of Qi Condensation to the fourth. Pleased with yourself?”

Bai Xiaochun blinked, then cleared his throat, unsure of how to respond. However, he continued to put on the charming face, reassuring himself that as long as he maintained the right attitude, things should work out fine in the end. However, when he thought



about the fact that he had just been munching on a Spirit Tail Chicken leg, he couldn't help but sweat.

Li Qinghou felt a headache coming on. After a moment of thought, he coolly continued, "Considering how you've been fooling around, you obviously have a lot of time on your hands. In that case, why don't you join the competition for fourth and fifth level Qi Condensation disciples in three months? It will be right here on Fragrant Cloud Peak."

Bai Xiaochun's heart immediately began to pound. He had heard about the competition Li Qinghou was referring to. He knew that there were prizes to be won, but he had also heard that the fighting was fierce. If you weren't careful, it was even possible to get injured. Bai Xiaochun scowled.

"Peak Lord, I'm only at the fourth level of Qi Condensation. If I join in the competition, what happens if one of them ends up beating me to death? What would I do then...?"

Li Qinghou completely ignored his question. Looking very serious, he said, "It's not a request. You will join the contest. Plus, if you don't place in the top 5, then I'll...."

Bai Xiaochun sighed. "I know, you'll expel me from the sect, right...?"

Li Qinghou glared at him. Knowing how mischievous Bai Xiaochun was, he realized that the threat of being expelled from the sect probably wasn't enough to keep him in place.

Remembering how much Bai Xiaochun feared death, he suddenly swished his sleeve, sweeping Bai Xiaochun up from the courtyard and then flying toward the top of the mountain.

Bai Xiaochun's heart began to thump madly. Li Qinghou's expressionless face gave him a very bad feeling. The wind buffeted his face as they flew along, and before he had time to even analyze the matter, Li Qinghou had taken him to a location behind Fragrant Cloud Peak.

It was a place considered to be a restricted area, a place few disciples ever visited. The first thing he noticed was the thick vegetation everywhere.

As they flew down toward the area, Li Qinghou pulled Bai Xiaochun along until they were in a valley. Almost immediately, a sinister aura could be sensed, and the various plants in the area brightened in color, and even began to rustle.

Bai Xiaochun's heart raced as he looked at the plants, and a sensation of deadly crisis rose up in his heart. He was just about to speak when, all of a sudden, a crimson viper raised its head, flicking its forked tongue as it stared icily at Bai Xiaochun.

"Snake!" Bai Xiaochun had no choice but to follow Li Qinghou into the valley, and when he did, his scalp went numb as he realized that the ground, the plants, and even the trees in this place were filled with countless snakes.

All of them were brightly colored, making it obvious that they

were vipers. Furthermore, all of them were staring at him with cold, beady eyes, forked tongues flicking in and out of their mouths.

Bai Xiaochun started trembling. He had always been scared of snakes, and the way these ones were looking at him left him terrified. Although they didn't actually seem like they were going to attack him, their long fangs dripped with venom in a very frightening fashion.

It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun suddenly remembered that he had his Undying Skin, and that these vipers probably wouldn't be able to bite through it. Considering that, even if there were more snakes than there already were, to him they were about as dangerous as feeble chickens. In the end, they weren't really very scary at all.

However, his eyes then turned up in thought, and he realized how risky it would be to not look scared. If that happened, Li Qinghou might take him to an even more dangerous place. Therefore, he immediately let out a shriek, and tried to look as frightened as possible.

Li Qinghou let out a cold snort, then unleashed his cultivation base. The wriggling snakes slowly moved out of the way to make a small path, at the end of which was a pitch-black cave that emanated a noxious odor.

"Uncle Li, s-spare me, please!" Bai Xiaochun called out in a quavering voice. "I didn't break any sect rules!" Li Qinghou's face was completely expressionless as he grabbed Bai Xiaochun and

dragged him over to the cave. Once they reached the cave mouth, he waved his sleeve, causing the darkness to fill with a bit of light.

Bai Xiaochun could instantly see that the cave was filled with numerous vipers, some of them very large. The hissing sounds they made seemed to contain some strange, mesmerizing power that instantly caused Bai Xiaochun's eyes to go wide.

A sensation of crisis rose up, and he began to pant as he realized that the cultivation base power of these vipers was unexpectedly high. There was even one four-colored viper that was comparable to the fifth level of Qi Condensation.

The stares of the snakes made Bai Xiaochun feel as if a cold wind were blowing down his back. Then he thought about his Undying Skin and realized that he wouldn't last for very long against these snakes. This time, he didn't need to pretend, he really was scared.

"This is 10,000 Snakes Valley," Li Qinghou said, voice cool, "where we harvest venom here on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Each one of these snakes is extremely venomous. In fact, a single drop of their venom is potent enough to kill a hundred oxen.

"Any cultivator under Foundation Establishment bitten by one of these snakes, who doesn't get the antidote in time, will die. Deep in the cave is the Snake King, who is in the great circle of Qi Condensation. Get bitten by that snake, and even I would have a hard time saving you.

"If you don't get in the top 5 in the Outer Sect's competition,

don't worry. I won't expel you from the sect. I'll just bring you here and have you harvest venom." Li Qinghou looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

"Um... uh... Uncle Li, don't worry, it's just a little sect competition, right? Only the top 5, you said, right? I'll definitely pull it off!" Bai Xiaochun's tongue felt as if it were sticking to the roof of his mouth, and his face was deathly pale. When he heard that there were even more fearsome vipers in the depths of the cave, he swore to himself that he would never come back to this place again in his entire life.

When Li Qinghou heard Bai Xiaochun's declaration, he smiled inwardly. However, his face remained completely expressionless, and he even snorted as he took Bai Xiaochun away. When they got back to Fragrant Cloud Peak, he tossed Bai Xiaochun onto a mountain path and then turned as if to leave.

But then he stopped and looked back. Voice casual, he said, "Oh right, how were the Spirit Tail Chickens?"

Without even waiting for Bai Xiaochun to respond, he turned and flew off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun sighed, then turned and headed back toward his courtyard, frowning the entire way. As he walked along, the wind blew, rustling the leaves, which made him think about the vipers.

Back in his courtyard, he sat there, gnashing his teeth and scowling. "Li Qinghou.... More like Li the Snake! Ridiculous!"

“I’ll definitely never go back to that 10,000 Snakes Valley. If I get bitten, I’ll lose my poor little life.” In that moment, Bai Xiaochun made his decision. “I’m definitely going to go all out to get into the top 5!”

“If I’m going to join that competition, then considering the level of my cultivation base, I’m definitely going to need some spirit medicine!” Taking a deep breath, Bai Xiaochun clenched his fists. A wild gleam appeared in his eyes as he glanced around. Eventually, his gaze fell upon the Spiritwinter Bamboo.

“After I finish the Spiritwinter Bamboo mission and get my reward, I’ll have enough merit points to get some spirit medicine. Unfortunately, the bamboo hasn’t even reached fifteen meters. I’m not sure if that meets the requirements....” Having reached this point in his train of thoughts, Bai Xiaochun still wasn’t certain about the bamboo. However, he didn’t have any other options. After doing a few calculations, he confirmed that the appointed deadline to hand in the spirit vegetation was rapidly approaching.

Bai Xiaochun scowled his way through a few more days. At dawn on the fourth day, he got up early and walked over to the bamboo. Then he wrapped his arms around one stalk after another to pull them up out of the ground.

What he found was that although the bamboo did not seem to be very heavy, each and every stalk actually felt as if it were made from metal, and was incredibly heavy.

The ground trembled constantly until ten stalks of bamboo were uprooted. Each one was close to fifteen meters tall, and as thick as a person. Throwing them over his shoulder, he marched out of the courtyard in the direction of the Missions Office.

Unfortunately, his bag of holding wasn't very big inside, and the bamboo just wouldn't fit in it. That was why he had to physically carry the bamboo. Thankfully, he was much stronger now, having achieved the Undying Iron Skin. Otherwise, he would never have been able to pull the task off.

As he walked along, he muttered to himself miserably. But then he thought about the competition, and the vipers, and possibility of his bones and tendons being snapped in the fighting.

“Why am I so unlucky...?”

## Chapter 27: Th-that's... Bamboo?

---

The bamboo was extremely heavy, and he was carrying ten stalks. Couple that with the fact that he was climbing a mountain, and soon Bai Xiaochun was huffing and puffing. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that he was in a really unfair situation.

“I began to practice Immortal cultivation because I want to live forever. Why the heck would I go around fighting and killing, huh?

“This bamboo could obviously grow a bit taller, but right now I need those merit points....” The more he thought about the situation, the more annoyed he got at the unfairness of it all. Sighing, he hefted his Spiritwinter Bamboo as he hiked up the mountain path.

Currently, quite a large group of Outer Sect disciples was gathered outside of Fragrant Cloud Peak's Missions Office, hands filled with various medicinal plants which they would exchange for merit points.

A Fragrant Cloud Peak Elder was present to inspect the items being handed in. The amount of merit points given as a reward depended on the quality of the items handed in.

Just outside of the building itself was a wide, flat boulder, upon which a ruddy-faced, white-haired old man sat cross-legged. A seemingly endless line of disciples stretched out in front of him,



and everyone in line had spirit plants clutched in hand. When the old man gave his appraisal, a young assistant off to the side would record the information and dole out the merit points.

“Not bad. This Watermist Orchid already has four petals. Mid-grade item.

“This Woodvein Ginseng is a bit too dark, and the earth-type power is too strong. It’s completely out of balance. Sorry, it doesn’t meet the requirements.”

Circling about overhead was a flock of elegant five-colored phoenixes, each one more than three meters long. Occasionally, they would make melodious calls that rang out in the area.

They were spirit pets belonging to the Elder who sat there, and whenever the appointed day came to hand in plants and vegetation, the birds would come along with him. They were, of course, the subject of much envy on the part of the Outer Sect disciples.

The Elder’s cultivation base was in the Foundation Establishment stage, and was clearly beyond ordinary. Although his overall skill with spirit medicines didn’t match up to Li Qinghou’s, he was still very famous in the sect. Furthermore, his obsession with the Dao of medicines had reached a frightening level that even Li Qinghou couldn’t equal. Many people even said that if a third master apothecary ever appeared in the Eastwood Continent, then it would definitely be this very Elder Zhou.

There was one particular young man in the line who wasn't very handsome, but stood tall and straight. When he reached Elder Zhou, he clasped hands and bowed respectfully. "Greetings, Elder Zhou, it's me, [Chen Zi'ang](#)."

Chen Zi'ang's name in Chinese is 陈子昂 chén zǐ áng. Chen is a common surname. Zi means a lot of things, including "son." Ang means "expensive" or "elevated"

When the other Outer Sect disciples in the area heard the young man's name, they all looked over curiously.

"Oh, so he's Elder Brother Chen Zi'ang. I heard that he's quite gifted when it comes to growing spirit plants."

"I heard that too. Ever since Chen Zi'ang joined the sect, he's never grown a spirit plant that got less than a high-grade rating. He's really incredible!"

As the discussions continued in low tones, Chen Zi'ang stood there with a tranquil, indifferent expression on his face. However, deep in his eyes burned a proud and lofty air.

Elder Zhou could see how pleased Chen Zi'ang was. He had long since been keeping an eye on him, considering how gifted he was when it came to growing spirit plants.

"Zi'ang, what type of plant did you grow this time?" Elder Zhou asked warmly.

“Elder Zhou, I’m happy to report that I grew Spiritwinter Bamboo!” With that, Chen Zi’ang waved his hand, causing ten stalks of Spiritwinter Bamboo to appear. Each one was as thick as an arm, and over two meters long. They were emerald green, and even flickered with a faint green glow.

“I first soaked the seeds in a spirit spring, then ground some spirit stones into gravel to act as soil. Next, I fed the plants with my own spiritual energy at least every six hours. Every three days, I would carefully tend to their leaves, and I even used the Ninegreens Profound Magic I mastered, as well as other medicinal plants, to grow them to this level!”

“Very good,” said Elder Zhou, stroking his beard. The praise in his eyes was clear. “These stalks of bamboo are over two meters long, and pulse with green energy. They exceed the high-grade mark, and can be classified as extreme high-grade. I encourage you to keep working hard. If you can grow the bamboo to over three meters, then they will be classified as superior-grade.”

When the surrounding Outer Sect disciple heard the words extreme high-grade, even more discussions broke out, and numerous envious gazes were cast in the direction of the Spiritwinter Bamboo.

A smile broke out on Chen Zi’ang’s face, and the lofty gleam in his eyes intensified. He clasped hands and bowed, and was just about to walk over to the assistant to collect his merit points, when a cold snort suddenly rang out.

“Elder Zhou, Disciple [Zhao Yiduo](#) also grew some Spiritwinter

Bamboo!” A long-faced young man with narrow eyes suddenly appeared. As he approached, he cast a glance of disdain in Chen Zi’ang’s direction.

Zhao Yiduo’s name in Chinese is 赵一多 zhào yī duō. Zhao is a common surname. Yi means “one” and duo means “more”

His sudden appearance on the scene instantly caused excitement among the surrounding Outer Sect disciples, who all looked over at him.

“It’s Elder Brother Zhao Yiduo! Elder Brother Zhao’s skill with spirit plants and vegetation is supposedly neck and neck with Chen Zi’ang’s!”

“Well now we get to see them face off. They’ve been rivals for some time now, and both of them want to be known as the number one botanist among all the disciples.”

Chen Zi’ang’s expression immediately darkened. He looked coldly at Zhao Yiduo, who glared back at him. The hostility in their eyes instantly intensified.

“Zhao Yiduo, why don’t you take out your Spiritwinter Bamboo,” Elder Zhou said encouragingly. Apparently, even he was interested in finding out what was going to happen. He was well aware of the competition between the two young disciples, and was in fact happy to see it. It was only by means of healthy competition that great advancement could be made.

Zhao Yiduo clasped hands and bowed to Elder Zhou, then slapped

his bag of holding to produce ten stalks of Spiritwinter Bamboo, each and every one of which was over three meters long and thicker than a person's leg. They were bright emerald green and even seemed somewhat crystalline. From the spiritual energy they emanated, it was clear that they were beyond normal, and also far above Chen Zi'ang's in terms of quality.

The mere sight of the bamboo sent the crowd into an uproar. Most people had heard that Spiritwinter Bamboo could grow longer than three meters, but had never seen it before.

“Spiritwinter Bamboo three meters long! I wonder how long it took to grow?”

“That Spiritwinter Bamboo has reached the point where it's emanating spiritual energy. Elder Brother Zhao's ability with plants definitely puts him as the number one Outer Sect disciple on Fragrant Cloud Peak!”

Seeing how excited the crowd was, Zhao Yiduo smiled provokingly at Chen Zi'ang.

Chen Zi'ang's face immediately darkened.

As for Elder Zhou, his eyes gleamed with praise as he looked at the bamboo and then nodded.

“Excellent, excellent. Quite a few disciples have handed in Spiritwinter Bamboo today, but yours is definitely the best in

terms of quality. It isn't high-grade, it's definitely superior-grade. Very, very good job, Zhao Yiduo. Keep up the good work!"

Zhao Yiduo once again bowed to Elder Zhou, then looked over challengingly at Chen Zi'ang. "Junior Brother Chen, it seems you need to put some more work into your studies."

Chen Zi'ang's expression grew even darker, and he snorted coldly. "Isn't it a bit early to gloat, Elder Brother Zhou? After all, it doesn't count when you have someone helping you. Next time, I'll definitely grow the Spiritwinter Bamboo to five meters tall!"

Hearing his, Zhao Yiduo laughed heartily. "Junior Brother Chen, if you talk yourself up too much, you're bound to crash and burn. Spiritwinter Bamboo is extremely hard to grow because of the incredible amount of spiritual energy it requires. For Qi Condensation disciples like us, growing it to three meters is the absolute limit of the limit. And you think you're going to grow it to five meters? Only Foundation Establishment Elders could do something like that. That's not even to mention six meters. In all the years I've been in the sect, I've never even seen six-meter-tall Spiritwin--"

Before Zhao Yiduo could even finish speaking, booming thuds could be heard from the path leading up to the Missions Office, as if some enormous creature were approaching. Instantly, the Outer Sect disciples turned in shock, whereupon gasps began to ring out.

The standoff between Zhao Yiduo and Chen Zi'ang was also interrupted, and both of them frowned and looked over toward the path.

Soon, what became visible were the tops of several stalks of enormous bamboo, thicker than a person. They were a bright emerald green, and if you looked closely, you would even see some violet specks flickering on their surface. They also emanated a splendid, multicolored glow.

Even more shocking was the powerful spiritual energy emanating off of the bamboo, which instantly led to cries of shock.

“Wh-what is that stuff!?”

“It looks like some kind of tree! But at the same time, it also looks like bamboo!”

Chen Zi’ang and Zhao Yiduo were frowning, and couldn’t even identify what it was they were looking at. However, they could tell that it was something incredible. Off to the side, Elder Zhou’s eyes were wide as he stared at the bamboo, and he even began to pant slightly.

Everyone stared as more and more of the bamboo became visible. When the bamboo was completely revealed, shockingly, each stalk was fifteen meters tall, and it was being carried by a petite young man, who was currently panting as he trudged up the path, the bamboo slung over his shoulder.

He almost looked like an ant carrying a steamed [mantou](#)....

Every step that he took resulting in a booming thud, and as he walked along, the Outer Sect disciples made way for him, shocked by how strong he appeared to be.

The young man was, of course, Bai Xiaochun, who had been grumbling to himself the entire way about the brutality of the contest and the horror of 10,000 Snakes Valley. Although he wanted to cry, no tears would come, and as he trudged along, he didn't even notice the crowd of people looking at him. When he reached Elder Zhou, he tossed the bamboo down onto the ground, which resulted in a huge boom. Then he sat down on top of the bamboo, huffing and puffing a bit as he wiped the sweat from his brow.

"I couldn't fit this bamboo in my bag of holding. Man, I'm totally worn out. Oh, hello Elder, I'm here to hand in this mission." All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun got an odd feeling, and looked around to find everyone in the crowd staring at his bamboo. Gasps could even be heard.

"Bamboo.... That stuff is actually bamboo?"

"It's so big! I've never seen bamboo that big before. Come on, they must be trees, right?!"

Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo couldn't conceal their astonishment as they realized what they were looking at. However, they almost couldn't make themselves believe it was true, and knelt down to inspect the bamboo more closely. Zhao Yiduo began to tremble, and had to resist the urge to try and break open one of the bamboo stalks to examine it from the inside.



Before he could, Elder Zhou tromped over and then waved his sleeve, sending Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo tumbling off to the side. Then Elder Zhou stood there, staring at the bamboo with wide eyes. After a long moment, he took a deep breath and said, "Th-this... this really is Spiritwinter Bamboo!!"

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples gaped in shock for a moment, and then burst into an uproar.

"Spiritwinter Bamboo!! I can't believe those big trees... are actually Spiritwinter Bamboo!!"

"How is that even possible? How could Spiritwinter Bamboo get so thick? Heavens, they're actually fifteen meters long!"

"Fifteen meters and as thick as a person. Th-that's... bamboo?"

The sounds of the uproar grew even louder as people began to compare Bai Xiaochun's bamboo with that of Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo.

## Chapter 28: Pressure Is Motivation

---

Bai Xiaochun gaped in shock at the commotion. Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo, apparently completely oblivious to the pain caused by Elder Zhou tossing them aside, rushed back toward the bamboo and knelt down to to examine it.

Elder Zhou began to study the stalks of bamboo one by one, his expression that of shock and elation.

Everyone's crazed reaction left Bai Xiaochun somewhat alarmed. In his mind, these people were acting like lunatics. It was just bamboo, after all, right? Besides, he had originally planned to grow it to a total of thirty meters before turning it in.

Bai Xiaochun took a few steps back and then tried to get the Elder's attention.

"Elder...." he cried loudly.

"Wonderful! Amazing!" Elder Zhou said, laughing as he began to caress each and every inch of the bamboo. Apparently, he hadn't even heard Bai Xiaochun speaking. "Spiritwinter Bamboo like this is extremely rare. Only by growing it to fifteen meters can it achieve such a deep green color. In fact, at this point, it's not a medicinal plant, but rather, the primary ingredient to forge spirit bamboo swords. It can even be used to cast certain unique magical techniques!"

"Listen up everyone. Take a deep breath." Looking very excited,

Elder Zhou closed his eyes and breathed in deeply through his nose. “Can you smell that fragrance? It smells like flesh and bone, right? That’s the unique aroma that appears after this type of bamboo reaches fifteen meters!”

Chen Zi’ang and Zhao Yiduo earnestly followed suit. The other disciples in the area also pressed forward to do the same.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. He had noticed that same aroma as he was carrying the bamboo down the path. However, he was pretty sure that... it was actually the aroma of chicken bones. After all, he had buried several hundred Spirit Tail Chicken skeletons in the spirit field where he had grown the Spiritwinter Bamboo. Furthermore... those bones had all been stripped clean of their meat by none other than him.

By now, Bai Xiaochun was thoroughly convinced that these people were crazy.

“Elder....” he cried out again.

However, it was at this point that a violent tremor ran through Elder Zhou; flames of rage sprang up in his eyes, and his expression twisted with rage.

“Dammit! What the hell happened here? Someone actually bit a chunk out? Spiritwinter Bamboo is extremely bitter and can’t be eaten raw! What bastard actually bit a chunk out and ruined the quality!?” Elder Zhou seemed begrieved; to him, it was like discovering a perfect piece of beautiful jade, only to find one part

that had been destroyed by pests. His head suddenly whipped up to look at Bai Xiaochun.

“It wasn’t me!” Bai Xiaochun blurted, backing up nervously. He suddenly thought back to the first time he had been struck by incredible hunger. In his desperation at not having anything to eat, he had taken a bite out of one of the stalks of bamboo. How could he ever have imagined this would be the terrifying scene that would result when he went to hand in the mission, or how that single bite would affect these lunatics?

When the surrounding disciples heard what Elder Zhou said, they peered over toward the last of the Spiritwinter Bamboo stalks, and sure enough, there was a big bite mark clearly visible.

Elder Zhou stared at the damaged portion of the bamboo, then let out a long sigh. After all, he was a Foundation Establishment cultivator, and was obsessed with the Dao of medicines. However, this bamboo that Bai Xiaochun had brought was so shocking, and so different from anything Elder Zhou had ever seen before, that he had lost his composure just now.

Finally, he took a deep look at Bai Xiaochun, then flicked his sleeve.

“This bamboo is extreme super-grade... no, wait, supreme-grade. Yes, list it as supreme-grade. The reward is 10,000 merit points!” The audience gasped in response. The usual reward for plant-growing missions was usually about 10 merit points. At the most, one might be able to get 100. But in this case, the reward was 10,000!

Off to the side, the assistant gaped in shock. For years and years, it had always been a rarity to have a spirit plant listed as supreme-grade.

In fact, this was the first one in hundreds of years.

Bai Xiaochun was very excited, and immediately walked over to the assistant and handed over his identity medallion. The assistant hesitated for a moment, then looked over at Elder Zhou, who was still studying the bamboo, then gritted his teeth and gave the merit points to Bai Xiaochun.

Having acquired his merit points, Bai Xiaochun quickly turned to leave, determined to never come back and deal with these lunatics ever again.

However, before he could leave, Elder Zhou suddenly called out. “Hey, what’s your name?”

“Bai Xiaochun,” was the immediate response. “I’m Bai Xiaochun, and my uncle is Li Qinghou!” Before coming here, he had been completely unaware that the bamboo would cause such a scene, and he was actually a bit worried about that, which was why he pulled out Li Qinghou’s name, as sort of a threat.

“Hmph.” Elder Zhou seemed to be irritated that Bai Xiaochun would resort to dropping Li Qinghou’s name. “You might think you’re pretty clever, but the Spirit Stream Sect is one of the great sects, with a long history. There are always disciples who come

along with their secrets and their unique good fortune. I won't lower myself to the level of asking for the specifics of how you grew this bamboo, but next time you grow something similar, you make sure to bring it all to me. I'll make sure you get a nice reward of merit points!" Finally, he waved his hand to dismiss Bai Xiaochun, then went back to studying the bamboo. It was at this point that, because of the matter with the bamboo, the entire mission-handover event concluded.

Bai Xiaochun clutched his command medallion firmly in hand as he hurried away from the Missions Office and then headed directly toward Fragrant Cloud Peak's Spirit Medicine Pharmacy, which was where disciples could acquire spirit medicines.

It was also where disciples could hand over spirit medicines that they had crafted, and thus earn merit points.

Bai Xiaochun sped over at top speed, then hurried around the Spirit Medicine Pharmacy making trying to decide what to buy. Eventually he decided to purchase a bottle of medicinal pills suitable for the fifth level of Qi Condensation. These medicinal pills were by no means cheap. Bai Xiaochun had originally assumed that 10,000 merit points was a lot, but unexpectedly, the spirit medicines were actually very expensive.

"Greengod Spiritgathering Pills," he murmured, looking at the medicinal pill bottle he held in his hand. Inside were three medicinal pills, which had cost him fully 4,000 merit points.

However, these were pills that ordinary Qi Condensation disciples would usually not have access to. They were quite

extraordinary; not only was their medicinal efficacy greater than that of ordinary spirit medicine, they could provide purer spiritual energy.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't convinced that merely stepping into the fifth level of Qi Condensation would be enough, so he planned to break through all the way to the great circle of the fifth level.

He had thought about aiming for the sixth level of Qi Condensation to avoid having to fight in the competition, but if he did that, he could well imagine how Li Qinghou would come up with some other method of punishing him.

As for the rest of his merit points, he didn't let them go to waste. He traded them for some disposable defensive talismans. With those hidden in his robe, he felt much safer.

Unfortunately, he didn't have enough merit points to go through with his plan of heading to the Treasure Pavilion to acquire a weapon or two suitable for the Qi Condensation stage. Instead, he headed back toward his residence. Once back in the courtyard, he sat down cross-legged in his log cabin, then pulled the medicinal pills out and studied them closely.

"I still have three months to go. It's time for some secluded meditation!" Gritting his teeth, he looked around to make sure no one was watching, then performed an incantation gesture and pointed out. Instantly, the turtle-wok flew out, along with a bunch of Spirit Tails, which he used to start a three-colored flame.

One tail feather wasn't enough to satisfy the turtle-wok. He had to feed in ten before the three designs on the wok lit up brightly. Then, he took a deep breath and put the three medicinal pills inside to perform a threefold spirit enhancement.

After the process was completed, the Greengod Spiritgathering Pills in his hand had three silver designs covering its surface. Finally, he placed one of them in his mouth.

The medicinal pill dissolved, and spiritual energy began to course through him explosively. Bai Xiaochun instantly began to utilize the breathing techniques and postures of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, using them to manage the flow of the spiritual energy.

A few days later, rumbling sounds filled Bai Xiaochun's log cabin, and numerous dust particles blasted out in a shockwave. Moments later, Bai Xiaochun's laughter could be heard ringing out.

"Fifth level of Qi Condensation!" he said, panting, eyes shining brightly. After eating so many Spirit Tail Chickens recently, his cultivation base had already reached the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation. By eating that one medicinal pill, he was able to easily break through into the fifth level.

More filth was expelled out from inside of him, but not as much as before. After washing up, he didn't immediately take out another medicinal pill, but rather, took time to stabilize his cultivation base. After five days passed, he took out the second of his threefold spirit enhanced Greengod Spiritgathering Pills, and consumed it. As the spiritual energy coursed through him, the river that was his spirit meridian grew larger, and flowed faster,



causing his cultivation base to climb higher at a rapid rate.

After stabilizing himself for a few more days, he consumed the third Greengod Spiritgathering Pill, and his cultivation base shot up to the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation.

By this point, everything about him seemed different than before. His skin was fairer, and there was something unique about his energy.

Bai Xiaochun was quite happy, but also realized that, normally speaking, it would be impossible to use only three medicinal pills to break through from the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation all the way to the great circle of the fifth level, and then be only a hair away from reaching the sixth level.

As far as he could tell, the only reason he was able to do so was the turtle-wok and its spirit enhancement ability.

The more Bai Xiaochun practiced cultivation, the more obvious it was to him how helpful the turtle-wok was. That in turn caused him to become even more curious about its origins.

Although it looked like a turtle shell, the more he studied it, the more it seemed that it wasn't.

In recent days, he had looked more into the matter of spirit enhancement, and had learned that Violet Cauldron Peak was known for their spirit enhancement abilities. In fact, if you paid

enough merit points, you could even acquire the services of the Elders there to perform spirit enhancements. Word had it that the Peak Lord of Violet Cauldron Peak was a grand master when it came to spirit enhancements.

Running his fingers along the designs that covered the turtle-wok, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered. Finally, he shook his head. There were too many things he didn't understand, and it wouldn't do any good to waste time thinking about them. Reaching his hand out, he caused the green jade pendant and his wooden sword to appear.

These were the only magical devices he owned at the moment. Gritting his teeth, he produced some more Spirit Tails as he prepared to perform threefold spirit enhancements on them.

"I wonder what the wooden sword and jade pendant will look like after I do the threefold spirit enhancement."

The wave of a hand caused the three designs on the turtle-wok to light up. When he sent the jade pendant flying inside, silver light shone, and rumbling sounds like that of thunder could be heard. Thankfully, they didn't echo out very far, so nobody heard them.

When the silver light faded away, the green jade pendant had three silver designs on it, which flickered brightly for a moment before fading away. However, Bai Xiaochun could sense that the jade pendant's aura was now as different from before as the Heavens were from the Earth.

In fact, it was even possible to see glowing violet speks within the green of the jade pendant. Even the shape of the pendant had changed; instead of being oval, it had now been flattened into a circular shape.

Bai Xiaochun poured some spiritual energy into it, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as a green shield sprang up around him, fully a meter thick and completely astonishing to behold.

## Chapter 29: Lightness-In-Heaviness

---

After performing a quick test on the defensive power of the jade pendant, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but laugh out loud. Next, he turned his attention to the wooden sword. He had acquired this wooden sword the moment he had joined the sect, and since then, had performed spirit enhancements on it twice.

“With the protective power of this jade pendant, after I perform a threefold spirit enhancement on my little wooden sword, I'll definitely be completely extraordinary!” Bai Xiaochun smiled, then began to prepare the little wooden sword for the spirit enhancement.

Silver light flickered within the turtle-wok. As it faded away, the little wooden sword appeared in front of Bai Xiaochun. Three silver designs gleamed on its surface, then gradually faded away. At the same time, the physical appearance of the sword changed. It was longer by a finger's length, and the grain of the wood was now virtually completely violet.

There was also a bizarre aroma which pulsed out of the sword, an aroma which, upon entering the nose, seemed sweet, but quickly caused the mind to enter a state of confused distraction.

Bai Xiaochun trembled for a moment, but then his eyes grew clear. He looked in shock at the wooden sword for a moment, then reached out to grab it, whereupon he found that it was many times heavier than before. Unexpectedly, as he held it in his hand, it felt as heavy as a boulder.

Eyes glittering, he examined the sword, and gradually a profound gleam rose up in his eyes.

“This wooden sword is made from the rarely-seen Heavycloud Wood,” he murmured, “which only needs to be refined for forty-nine days before you can use it in equipment forging. It can also be used in mass-production.” Next, he focused on the veins in the wood of the sword.

“Violet veins. There’s only one explanation for that. After performing these handful of spirit enhancements, these are the signs of the sword’s transmogrification.” Bai Xiaochun closed his eyes and began to review the information about Heavycloud Wood that he had gleaned when studying about plants and vegetation.

After a while, his eyes opened, and they gleamed with anticipation. He performed an incantation gesture and then tapped the little wooden sword, which instantly caused a black light to flicker out, within which were tiny violet specks. Suddenly, the sword shot out of the log cabin, across the courtyard, and then another thirty meters or so, where it stabbed into a huge boulder.

Without making a single sound, the sword then spun around inside of the rock, pierced out of it, and flew back to Bai Xiaochun.

The sword wasn’t damaged at all, and in fact began to emanate a piercing aura.

Bai Xiaochun’s expression brightened. He played around with the sword a little bit more, then once again painted over the designs.

Finally, he opened the door of his log cabin, stepped out, and took a deep breath. Unfortunately, as soon as he thought about the competition in two months, his previously high spirits sank a bit.

“This isn’t good enough. I’m still not well enough prepared. The other people in the competition are definitely going to be vicious beasts. I need to do more.” Grinding his teeth, he thought about the second level of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, which he had read about in the manual.

Lightness-in-Heaviness. Heaviness-in-Lightness.

Those two levels of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art were powerful magics that appeared when cultivating the art. If both were cultivated to the pinnacle, they could lead to a divine ability called Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning.

On the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect, the fundamental techniques of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art were something that virtually everyone practiced. However, few people cultivated Heaviness-in-Lightness, and as for the second stage of Lightness-in-Heaviness, that was even more rare. As for those who cultivated the art to the absolute peak, and could unleash the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning divine ability, they were most rare of all.

Actually, the majority of those who gained enlightenment of Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning were disciples from Violet Cauldron Peak.

“Lightness-in-Heaviness.... Only by reaching that stage of being

able to completely control physical objects can I even be absolutely assured of rising above the pack.” Bai Xiaochun continued to think about the description of the technique as he gazed down at the little wooden sword.

Back when he had fought his battle with Xu Baocai, everyone from the Supervisors’ Department and even the Ovens had mistakenly assumed that he had gained enlightenment of Lightness-in-Heaviness. Now that he thought back to the situation, an idea flickered through his mind.

“The reason people thought I had achieved Lightness-in-Heaviness was because of how adeptly I controlled my little wooden sword. However, the real reason behind that was mostly because of how incredible the sword became after my spirit enhancement.

“The truth of the matter is that my ability to control it isn’t actually that incredible, and definitely is not Lightness-in-Heaviness.” Frowning, Bai Xiaochun randomly sat down cross-legged and looked at the wooden sword. Gradually, his eyes grew blank, and were soon shot with blood.

A moment later, his right hand suddenly waved up into the air, sending the little wooden sword flying out. It whistled through the air in front of him, kicking up a cloud of dust. Bai Xiaochun’s frown deepened as his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and then pointed his finger out. However, what he pointed at wasn’t the sword, but rather, the huge rock outside the courtyard that he had just stabbed with the sword moments ago.

The wave of his finger caused the huge stone to tremble slightly, then gradually rise up into the air by about one third of a meter. But then Bai Xiaochun's spiritual energy grew unstable, and it thumped back down with a boom.

Bai Xiaochun was not dismayed, though. In fact, quite the opposite. His eyes began to shine brightly. Focusing completely, he circulated his spiritual energy and once again waved his finger.

Once, twice, three times....

Time passed. Half a month was gone in the blink of an eye. Virtually that entire time, Bai Xiaochun worked on trying to control the boulder. Of course, this boulder was about as tall as three people put together, and weighed about [1,500-1,600 kilograms](#). Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun was already in the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation, manipulating an object like this was not an easy task.

I already did the math, and for a boulder that tall to weigh only 1,500-1,600 kg, it would have to be really, really skinny. I think we can assume that Er Gen either made a mistake in how much it weighed, or it's some sort of magical rock that doesn't weigh as much as real-world boulders

The only reason Bai Xiaochun could do so was because of the extraordinarily refined state of his cultivation base. Anyone else in the fifth level of Qi Condensation would never be able to move the boulder more than a handful of centimeters.

Bai Xiaochun worked hard for an entire month. By this point, he



realized that the reason controlling the boulder was so difficult wasn't because of a lack of spiritual energy, but rather, that his level of control was lacking. Even when he still had plenty of spiritual energy, the connection would always break.

“The key is to move the threads of spiritual energy at a constant speed,” he muttered hoarsely, eyes bloodshot but shining brightly. “That’s how to make sure they never break.”

It was the same principle that applied to mortals when they were making noodles at home. If you pulled the dough apart too quickly, it would snap. If you went too slowly, it would be impossible to stretch them out very far. You had to use just the right amount of strength, and then you can control the objects smoothly and clearly however you wish.

If cultivators wanted to control physical objects to a degree that surpassed the ordinary, they would need to use just the right amount of strength, and maintain stability. Of course, that increased the level of difficulty significantly.

“I get it now!” Bai Xiaochun thought excitedly. “Lightness-in-Heaviness is about more than the words ‘light’ and ‘heavy’. It’s not just being able to control heavy objects as if they didn’t weigh a lot. That’s just the surface meaning. The true, deeper meaning has to do, not with physical objects, but rather, with the way you manipulate spiritual energy!

“In the fifth level of Qi Condensation, your total reserve of spiritual energy is what makes the heaviness. When you take that spiritual energy and convert it into numerous tiny, unbreakable

threads, that is the lightness. Doing it correctly is Lightness-in-Heaviness. Of course, with the surface meaning, the result is the speed with which you can effortlessly control physical objects!” After getting to the root of the problem, he waved his hand again, and the boulder began to tremble. Then it suddenly rose up into the air.

It was almost as if some enormous hand had simply grabbed it and pulled it up. Then, it began to whistle through the air toward Bai Xiaochun. However, before it could reach him, it suddenly fell down out of the air into his courtyard, where it kicked up a huge cloud of dust.

Bai Xiaochun felt no discouragement. He continued to practice for another half a month. Unfortunately, for that entire time, he was unable to maintain one continuously stable thread of spiritual energy.

Even when he was able to form a stable thread, the incredible heaviness of the rock ensured that the threads of spiritual energy always grew unstable and broke.

Of course, when it came to controlling the little wooden sword, he had no problems whatsoever. Because of the vast difference in weight between the boulder and the sword, Bai Xiaochun now felt that controlling the wooden sword was much, much easier. Furthermore, after the month or more of training, he could move it with much greater speed.

In actuality, he really had achieved Lightness-in-Heaviness. However, he wasn’t satisfied. Eyes completely bloodshot, he

gritted his teeth, and that vicious determination once again appeared.

“I refuse to believe I can’t do it!” He performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing the boulder to fly over and hover directly above him.

Beads of sweat popped out on his forehead as he looked up nervously at the rock, exerting all the possible effort he could muster to preserve that invisible thread of spiritual energy. After all, if it broke, then the rock would fall. Although it wouldn’t kill him, it would definitely be very painful.

This time, he was clearly able to maintain the connection for a lot longer than before. However, after about an hour passed, rumbling sounds began to echo out, and then Bai Xiaochun let out a yelp as the stone smashed down. After a long moment, it trembled and fell off to the side as Bai Xiaochun crawled out from underneath it.

Thanks to his Undying Skin, he wasn’t hurt. However, the pain of what had just occurred left him grimacing.

Despite that, his resolve grew even more intense. Another month went by, and the rock smashed down onto him over and over again. Eventually, he reached the point where he could actually keep it afloat for an entire day without dropping it.

Furthermore, the height to which he could lift it grew greater and greater. Soon, he could hold it thirty meters high in the air. Of course, the pain that resulted when he dropped it from that height

left Bai Xiaochun completely pale-faced.

However, that was the only way to refine himself to the pinnacle.

Gradually, his ability to achieve Lightness-in-Heaviness with his internal spiritual energy was growing more and more stable. Eventually, he reached the point where he almost never broke the connection. However, he still wasn't satisfied. Next, he didn't practice while sitting cross-legged, but instead, while exercising.

That made things even more difficult, and led to continuous booms ringing out in his courtyard.

Time passed, one day at a time. Soon the competition Li Qinghou had mentioned was now only three days away. The scene in Bai Xiaochun's courtyard was that of a figure zipping around while a 1,500 kilogram boulder floated around up above. Despite how much Bai Xiaochun was moving around, the boulder remained motionless up in the air.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun stopped running around, and stood there in front of his log cabin, laughing heartily. Then, he waved his right hand, causing the boulder to fly out of the courtyard and settle back firmly into the ground.

Next, he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing his little wooden sword to slash out in front of him. It moved so quickly it was little more than a blur; clearly it was much more powerful than before.

Bai Xiaochun's face lit up with delight, and his hand began to flash with incantation gestures.

The speed combined with the might of the sword, resulting a shocking combination. All of a sudden, the courtyard almost seemed to be filled with innumerable little wooden swords, all flying about.

In the end, he flicked his sleeve, causing the sword projections to vanish. Only one wooden sword remained, which then shot back toward Bai Xiaochun and vanished into his bag of holding.

“Now I finally feel ready to get into the top 5.” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. Although he didn't feel one hundred percent confident, time was running out. All he could do was settle his qi and calm his mind, then sit down cross-legged to meditate and put himself in the proper state.

# Chapter 30: Bring It On!

---

Three days later. Dawn.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes opened at sunrise. He took a deep breath, and a serious expression could be seen on his face. This was his first time taking part in a competition like this.

His fight early on with Xu Baocai actually didn't really count as much of a battle. However, now that he was going to participate in Fragrant Cloud Peak's Outer Sect competition, he would be truly fighting against his fellow sect members.

He slowly rose to his feet, organized his bag of holding, and then somberly walked out of his residence. Moments later though, he came running back and started rummaging around under his bed until he found the leather coats he still had from back in his days at the Ovens. After donning several layers, he then placed his jade pendant somewhere he could access it easily.

Were it not for the fact that it would have led to too many questions, he would have put his turtle-wok on his back.

"Ah, why didn't I think of this earlier!" he thought regretfully. "I can't believe I forgot about that big black wok of mine." However, he was running out of time, and had no choice but to grit his teeth, turn, and leave. Taking a glance in the direction of the distant sun, his eyes filled with determination. Puffing his chest out, he began to climb toward the top of the mountain.

At the moment, he was wearing far too many layers of leather clothing. Even though he didn't have the big black wok on, he still looked somewhat like a [sticky rice dumpling](#).... He was bundled up so tightly that after walking for only a little bit, he was already starting to sweat.

However, even if he sweat more profusely, he wouldn't shed even one item of clothing. The competition was too important, and he couldn't stop thinking about how brutal it would be. As he walked along the path, he suddenly realized that it was quite a foggy morning on the mountain, and he actually had no idea where exactly he was.

“Did I take a wrong turn...?” he thought, and instantly looked around for someone to ask directions from. At the same time, his heart began to thump from the fear of possibly being late.

\*\*

At the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak was a fighting arena, which was where the competition was to take place. Quite a few people were already gathered there to watch the proceedings, and were chatting in hushed tones.

There were even some disciples in the audience who were in the fifth level of Qi Condensation, although most of them stood there with arms folded across their chests as they looked at their Junior Brothers and Sisters who would be participating in the competition. Of course, there were also people there to cheer on their friends.

This Outer Sect competition wasn't very formal, but it was a place where the participants could stand out from the crowd. There were about twenty people who had come to join the competition, all of whom were sitting in the area cross-legged in meditation, preparing in earnest for the fighting to begin.

No one in the competition was in the third level of Qi Condensation. Although the rules allowed for that, most of the people who actually joined the competition were in the fifth level of Qi Condensation, although there were five or six who were in the fourth level.

There was one young woman among the group who stood out from everyone else. She was tall and beautiful, and her Outer Sect disciple uniform could not conceal her curvaceous form. Anyone who laid eyes on her wouldn't be able to stop from slipping into a bit of a reverie.

Her skin was white like snow, and she had eyebrows that curved as gracefully as willow leaves. She really was spectacularly beautiful. As for the Daoist trousers she wore, although they were loose, they stretched tightly around her rear end in a way that made it virtually impossible for any man to look away.

There were quite a few Outer Sect disciples clustered around her, obviously her admirers.

Although she couldn't quite compare to Zhou Xinqi, she was still one of the most famous of the Outer Sect disciples, Du Lingfei.



“Elder Sister Du’s cultivation base is in the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation, so she’ll definitely take first place in this competition. There’s not even any suspense in the matter.”

“You can’t underestimate Elder Brother Chen Zi’ang, though. I heard that he had a cultivation base breakthrough last month. He might not be in the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation, but he’s close.” Standing not too far away from Du Lingfei was an arrogant-looking young man, the same Chen Zi’ang who had been shocked by Bai Xiaochun’s bamboo outside the Missions Office that day.

Even as everyone was discussing the matter, Chen Zi’ang looked over at Du Lingfei with a strange gleam in his eyes. Although he wasn’t too confident in being able to take first place, he was pretty certain he could take second. Besides, he might also be able to take advantage of the situation to get to know Du Lingfei a bit better.

It was at about this point that two beams of light whistled through the air from off in the distance. It was none other than Li Qinghou, followed by an emaciated old man. The old man had swarthy skin, but his eyes shone brightly, and he seemed like a very strict person.

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples were completely shocked to find that Li Qinghou would be in attendance at the competition, and quickly clasped hands in greeting.

“Greeting, Peak Lord. Greetings, Elder Sun.” Everyone was

flabbergasted that the Peak Lord would personally come to an event like this. Small competitions like this were almost always presided over by Elder Sun.

Du Lingfei and Chen Zi'ang were also shocked, and had very serious expressions on their faces as they bowed in greeting to Li Qinghou.

Li Qinghou looked around benevolently, nodding. As he scanned the crowd of disciples, however, he frowned when he realized that Bai Xiaochun wasn't there.

When the surrounding Outer Sect disciple saw Li Qinghou frowning, their hearts began to thump. Du Lingfei instantly began to get nervous, unsure of why the Peak Lord might be displeased.

“Shall we begin, Peak Lord?” asked Elder Sun, who stood next to Li Qinghou.

Li Qinghou was just about to reply when, all of a sudden, a sweat-soaked spheroid shape could be seen speeding toward them from off in the distance.

“I got lost!” cried Bai Xiaochun as he ran along. “It was too foggy....” Not only was Bai Xiaochun very nervous, he also felt that the whole situation was very unfair. After all, he wasn't very familiar with all the mountain paths, and considering how foggy it had been, he had simply gotten lost while thinking.

As soon as the words left his mouth, all of the Outer Sect disciple involuntarily looked over. There were quite a few of them who were familiar with Bai Xiaochun, and when they heard the words he called out, they began to snicker. As for those who didn't know him, they frowned, and gleams of derision could be seen in their eyes.

As far as they were concerned, the only reason he could have for getting lost on the way to the competition was that he rarely ventured up to the top of the mountain, and didn't care much about the competitions that the sect held. Most likely, he was only used to strolling around for pleasure.

Du Lingfei looked at him, and remembered him as one of the people who had been chasing after Zhou Xinqi recently. Supposedly, he had worked hard to catch the great chicken bandit. Du Lingfei immediately turned away in disdain, not willing to even look at him.

Chen Zi'ang looked at Bai Xiaochun in complete shock, and couldn't help but glance over at Li Qinghou. He hadn't forgotten what Bai Xiaochun had said at the Missions Office about Li Qinghou being his uncle. That would explain why Li Qinghou had been frowning right now, and after analyzing the matter, he realized that when fighting Bai Xiaochun, he would have to be careful not to beat him too badly.

Li Qinghou snorted coldly, glaring at Bai Xiaochun for a moment before nodding at Elder Sun.

Elder Sun looked thoughtfully at Bai Xiaochun for a moment,

then laughed and waved his sleeve. “Very well. All disciples who wish to participate in the Outer Sect fighting competition, please step into the arena.”

Seeing Li Qinghou’s glare caused Bai Xiaochun to feel more than ever that the situation was completely unfair. However, he didn’t dare to give voice to his sentiments. As soon as the words left Elder Sun’s mouth, Bai Xiaochun was the first disciple to leap up onto the platform, chest puffed out proudly, looking as though mountains of daggers and seas of flames couldn’t impinge on his honor.

Soon, all the contestants were in the arena. Including Bai Xiaochun, there were twenty in total.

The rules for competitions like this one were fairly lax. Elder Sun looked at the contestants for a moment, then pulled out a small cloth sack, within which were a collection of marbles with numbers on them. One by one, the competitors filed over to take a marble, which would indicate the order in which they fought.

Bai Xiaochun didn’t manage to get first in line. He got stuck in the middle, and when he pulled out his marble, it had the number 11 written on it.

“Very well,” Elder Sun said coolly. “Now, everyone step back so that the first match can begin. Fighters number one and two, prepare to begin!” Bai Xiaochun and the others quickly left the fighting arena, whereas the disciples with the number one and two marbles remained. As the two stared each other down, brilliant light began to shine in their eyes.

Soon they began to fight, and the booming sounds of battle rang out. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's mind was racing. He kept telling himself that, considering there were twenty people in this competition, all he had to do was win twice to make it into the top 5. He was also wondering who it was that got the number twelve marble, but no one was willing to reveal to everyone else which numbers they had, making it virtually impossible for him to determine who he would be fighting.

Even as his spirits began to fall, the first match ended, and the second began. Du Lingfei was one of the fighters in this match, and she immediately performed an incantation gesture, causing a banner to fly out, which then turned into a stream of mist that enveloped her opponent. After struggling a bit, the disciple couldn't escape, and conceded, filled with admiration for Du Lingfei.

The third and fourth matches went by quickly enough, and when it came time for the fifth match, Chen Zi'ang secured a quick and efficient victory over a disciple in the fourth level of Qi Condensation.

"Fighters number eleven and twelve, step forward and let the match begin," Elder Sun called out. Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and walked forward, a very serious expression on his face. After setting foot into the arena, he found that his opponent was a tall, gaunt young man with a cold smile on his face.

His cultivation base was extraordinary, in the fifth level of Qi Condensation. His eyes flashed like lightning, and overall, he

seemed like the type of person who was not to be trifled with.

“Well Junior Brother,” the gaunt young man said, his voice cold, “you have the bad luck to have run into me in the first round. It’s not too late to concede. If you don’t, you’ll have to take responsibility for yourself if you get injured.”

However, in the instant that the words left the young man’s mouth, Bai Xiaochun suddenly let out a powerful roar.

The roar was so intense that everything shook, and quite a few audience members were shocked. The gaunt young man was also taken aback, and even backed up a bit without even thinking about it, staring at Bai Xiaochun with wide eyes.

After roaring, Bai Xiaochun slapped his jade pendant, causing a green glow to surround him. That didn’t leave him feeling safe, though, so he pulled out a big stack of paper talismans, which he rapidly stuck all over himself. Each time he did, they would emit a powerful glow, until he was covered with no less than ten individual shields. Their combined power transformed into a protective wall nearly a meter-and-a-half thick. From a distance, the sight was completely shocking.

Because of all the protective shields, Bai Xiaochun’s subsequent shout was actually a bit muffled.

“Alright, bring it on!”

The gaunt young man was still staring blankly at Bai Xiaochun, and it wasn't just him. The other Outer Sect disciples, including the other contestants, were all gaping in shock. In all the times they had observed competitions like this, they had never seen anyone use protective shields to such an extent.

Li Qinghou's face twitched, but from the look in his eyes, it was clear he could do nothing about the situation.

Chen Zi'ang took a deep breath as he grew even more certain that Bai Xiaochun and Li Qinghou were actually relatives. However, Du Lingfei simply gave a cold harrumph, and her derision increased.

Everyone watched with wide eyes as the gaunt young man down in the arena let out his own roar, then performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing a wooden sword to fly directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

---

Du Lingfei







# Chapter 31: Humiliated!

---

The gaunt young man's wooden sword pulsed with a strange energy, streaking through the air in a prismatic beam, directly toward Bai Xiaochun. However, before it could even get close, a pinging sound rang out from the exterior of Bai Xiaochun's thick meter-and-a-half shield as the wooden sword bounced off of it.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun's protective shields flickered, his eyes glittered, and he breathed a sigh of relief. Clearing his throat, he actually just sat down cross-legged.

The audience exchanged confused glances. They weren't really sure what to say in response to Bai Xiaochun and his extreme level of defense. They had seen people who focused on defense before, but... had never seen anyone who shielded himself this much.

As for his opponent, the young man's face first flushed, then went pale. Gritting his teeth, he roared, sending his flying sword shooting toward the glowing shields, ratcheting up in power even as it shot through the air.

A pinging sound rang out as the flying sword flew in again and again, but each time, it was sent spinning away. Finally, the pale-faced young man's spiritual energy was more than half depleted, and a look of despair appeared on his face.

He had been fighting in duels for years, but this was the first time he had encountered an opponent who hid like a turtle in a shell. However, he wasn't willing to give in yet. He had joined the

competition with the express purpose of taking 3rd place. Staring at Bai Xiaochun with bloodshot eyes, he furiously roared, “Get out from behind that shield!”

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t scared at all by this young man, so he didn’t have any reservations about staying behind the shield and shouting, “If you’re good enough, why don’t you come on inside!”

Strange expressions appeared on the faces of everyone in the audience as they looked at Bai Xiaochun, not sure whether to laugh or cry. The gaunt young man was so angry that blue veins popped out on his forehead as he clenched his jaw. Finally, he bit his tongue and spit out a mouthful of blood. When it landed on his wooden sword, the entire thing turned the color of blood.

Discussion immediately broke out in the audience.

“Blood Spirit Magic!”

“For him to use that magical technique shows that he really has been driven to madness!”

The blood-colored wooden sword moved even faster than before, and emitted double the pressure. Blood-colored light spread out in all directions as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

A boom rang out as the wooden sword pierced a full three inches into the shield. Rumbling could be heard as it tried to pierce further, but failed. In fact, because too much force was being

exerted, cracks began to spread out over the sword.

A moment later, a pop could be heard as the entire wooden sword... shattered into pieces, which slowly floated down to the ground.

The gaunt young man's eyes went wide, and blood sprayed out of his mouth. His spiritual energy was vastly depleted, his magical item destroyed, and he was so furious simply passed out.

As Li Qinghou watched the scene playing out, his face grew increasingly unsightly. Chuckling wryly, Elder Sun stepped forward, signalled for people to come carry the gaunt young man away, and then declared Bai Xiaochun the winner.

“Ah, he let me win!” Bai Xiaochun said as the shield light around him faded away. Looking very solemn, he puffed his chest out and clasped his hands behind his back, looking every bit like a Chosen. As for the gaunt young man, as he was being carried off, he apparently heard Bai Xiaochun's words, regained consciousness, coughed up another mouthful of blood, and then passed out again.

Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun turned to Elder Sun and clasped hands. Then he flicked his sleeve and walked out of the arena.

The Outer Sect disciples who had come to watch the competition took everything in fairly well. At most, they had strange looks on their faces. As for the contestants, they were looking at Bai Xiaochun with very unsightly expressions.

That was especially true of the people who had already won their respective matches. When they compared the gaunt young man's current condition with Bai Xiaochun, they couldn't help but feel the need to be on guard.

The competition continued, and soon the rest of the matches were completed. Of the original twenty participants, half had been eliminated to produce the current top 10.

That included Du Lingfei, Chen Zi'ang, and Bai Xiaochun, who stood there, chin jutting out, looking around at his fellow top 10 competitors. Inwardly, he was saying, "All I have to do is win one more match and then I'll have succeeded!"

Seeing hope right there in front of him, he felt quite excited.

Elder Sun looked over the ten contestants, his gaze lingering on Bai Xiaochun for a moment before saying, "The top 5 will now be selected. Would the ten of you please step forward to select your marbles."

This time, Bai Xiaochun scrambled to be first in line, and pulled out a marble with the number two written on it. Afterward, he immediately turned to study his fellow competitors.

It didn't take long for everyone to draw a marble, after which Elder Sun announced that the first two fighters were to begin their match. Bai Xiaochun was joined by a burly, muscular man who, upon seeing who he was fighting, began to laugh loudly.

“Other people might fear your defenses, but I don’t care at all about them. I’m also adept with defense, so let’s just wait and see which of us two can hold out for longer!” Laughing, the man slapped his bag of holding to produce a shield. After imbuing it with some spiritual energy, the shield grew larger and began to emit a yellow glow which completely surrounded the man.

The man wasn’t done yet, though. Roaring, his flesh and muscles expanded, and he even grew a few inches taller. The entire scene was quite shocking.

“I can’t believe its Body Forging magic!”

“That little shield looks familiar. Don’t tell me it’s the Dawnlight Shield! That thing costs 9,000 merit points!” Everyone was shocked, and as for Bai Xiaochun, his brow was furrowed.

When Elder Sun saw what was happening, he nodded his head slightly, eyes shining with a look of praise. Turning to Li Qinghou, he said, “This kid is Li Shan, fifth level of Qi Condensation. He’ll be a difficult opponent, as he was born with Godly power, plus cultivates Body Forging magic. Not only is he incredibly strong, he also excels in defense.”

Li Qinghou nodded slightly, then looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was studying the burly man’s transformed body, and the shield he had. He recognized the shield from his visit to the treasure Pavilion, and although he wasn’t sure exactly how many



merit points it cost, his frown deepened.

Everyone watching the competition seemed very interested to find out what was going to happen, especially the other disciples in the competition, who were clearly pleased to gloat in the misfortune of others.

“That fair-skinned disciple sure got unlucky.”

“Well, he got super lucky before, that’s all. Now that he’s facing a powerful opponent like this, he’ll naturally get beaten back into place.”

As the audience discussed the developments, the burly man smiled viciously and then began to stride rapidly toward Bai Xiaochun.

“There’s nothing you can do. I beat the last disciple I fought without even drawing a weapon. My fist is the most powerful magical technique I have!”

The man sped up, causing a wind to blast out. As he closed in, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered and he suddenly waved his finger, causing his little wooden sword to fly out from his bag of holding.

Without the slightest pause, it shot out in front of Bai Xiaochun toward the burly man.

As it slashed toward him, sword qi built up for dozens of meters



around the sword, causing rumbling sounds to echo out.

The burly man's face fell, and his scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. His eyes widened as an intense sensation of crisis washed through him. Without the slightest hesitation, he fell into retreat. Roaring, he waved both hands, sending his shield out to block the sword.

A boom rang out as the wooden sword and the little shield slammed into each other. However, the shield didn't do anything to even slow down the wooden sword. It was blasted apart, and the wooden sword continued on toward the burly man.

The man's face was filled with shock; even if he were capable of dodging faster, it would do no good. The flying sword was on him in the blink of an eye, causing an icy wind to buffet his face.

"I concede!" he shouted without hesitation, his voice rising by a few octaves as he fell to the ground.

A buzzing sound could be heard as the wooden sword stopped just in front of the man's forehead, then turned and flew back into Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding.

Bai Xiaochun blinked, also somewhat shocked by the wooden sword. Before, he had only practiced with it, and had no idea it was so powerful. And that was before he even began to utilize Lightness-in-Heaviness.

After looking up in thought for a moment, he jutted his jaw out, folded his hands behind his back, and looked coolly at the burly man.

The man's face was pale white, and yet he still didn't seem to want to back down. Crawling to his feet, he glared at Bai Xiaochun and said, "Using the power of magical items doesn't count as winning! I don't accept this as being a defeat!"

With that, the man turned and stalked out of the arena.

Elder Sun looked over at Bai Xiaochun, also astonished by the power of the wooden sword. However, he didn't say anything other to announce that Bai Xiaochun was the victor.

"Hahaha," Bai Xiaochun laughed to himself. "In the next battle I'll just instantly concede. I became a cultivator to live forever, right? All this killing and fighting is too barbaric. That's not how Bai Xiaochun does things." Bai Xiaochun left the arena, feeling wonderful at having complied with Li Qinghou's requirement to get into the top 5.

Li Qinghou's eyes had also come to rest on Bai Xiaochun. Although everyone else had been focused on how incredible the flying sword was, Li Qinghou hadn't been paying attention to that at all. He had been watching the skill and ease with which Bai Xiaochun controlled the flying sword.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had won another match, the crowd began to sigh emotionally.

“Ah, this guy must be rich, that’s why he has such an incredible wooden sword. Hmph. If he had any other weapon he definitely couldn’t have won!”

“Magical devices have nothing to do with your cultivation. First he used those amulets, then that sword. What a waste! He’s definitely going to go broke eventually.”

The grumblings didn’t last for long though. The next battle soon got underway. Du Lingfei was fighting an opponent with an extraordinary cultivation base. It was a fierce fight, but Du Lingfei didn’t use her banner. Instead, she utilized a flying sword. They fought back and forth in dazzling fashion until suddenly, Du Lingfei’s flying sword shot forward with incredible speed to appear directly in front of her opponent.

Such speed vastly surpassed that which ordinary disciples could control, sending the audience into an uproar when people realized what they were seeing.

“I can’t believe its Lightness-in-Heaviness!!”

“Du Lingfei has actually reached enlightenment of that stage....”

“It’s Lightness-in-Heaviness!” Deep within Elder Sun’s eyes, the glitter of approval could be seen as he looked at Du Lingfei.

Li Qinghou also nodded.

Chen Zi'ang was shocked, and most everyone else who had made it into the top 10 had similar reactions. As for her opponent, he chuckled bitterly and clasped hands to concede.

Du Lingfei stood there in the arena, looking around proudly. Clasp hands toward Li Qinghou and Elder Sun, she left the arena.

The crowd was still in an uproar.

However, Bai Xiaochun was left standing there, blinking.

“That level of speed counts as Lightness-in-Heaviness?” he thought, astonished.

As Du Lingfei proudly left the arena, slight drops of sweat could be seen running down her face. Despite being in the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation, fighting two successive battles was quite a drain on her spiritual energy. That was especially true of the battle just now, in which her opponent had possessed unusual battle prowess. In the end, she had been forced to unleash her magic of Lightness-in-Heaviness, which was an even bigger drain on her spiritual energy. That was how she had secured victory.

Her goal was 1st place, and she knew that subsequent opponents would only be more powerful. Because this particular sect competition wasn't very strictly organized, she wouldn't have much time to rest before the next fight. Therefore, she

immediately pulled out a medicinal pill, which she consumed, then closed her eyes and began to take advantage of the time to recover.

The top 5 now consisted of Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei, as well as Chen Zi'ang. In the end, there were two other young men, both of whom had profound cultivation bases in the fifth level of Qi Condensation.

Currently, everyone was in the process of rotating their cultivation bases, taking advantage of every opportunity to replenish some spiritual energy.

Only Bai Xiaochun didn't seem to have spent any spiritual energy at all. In fact, he even stood off to the side yawning. When everyone else who had been eliminated from the competition saw that, it left them with the urge to beat him.

Now that he had fulfilled Li Qinghou's demand to get into the top 5, he didn't care at all about the rest of the competition.

Trying to suppress his boredom, he looked over at the other four top 5 competitors, especially Du Lingfei, musing that if the speed she had just unleashed counted as Lightness-in-Heaviness, then he was surely far, far beyond that.

"It's too bad she has such an extremely murderous aura. Why would a good girl like that be so into fighting and killing? Don't tell me that all girls who practice Immortal cultivation are weirdos like this? Zhou Xinqi is super proud, and Hou Xiaomei is way too moody." Bai Xiaochun shook his head. He was just about to look

away from Du Lingfei when she seemed to sense that he was looking at her. Her eyes suddenly snapped open to stare at him coldly.

As far as Du Lingfei was concerned, Bai Xiaochun wasn't even worth thinking about. After watching his first two battles, she was of the opinion that he had pulled off lucky wins, which caused the derision in her heart to grow stronger.

“Well well, you dare to stare at me, do you?!” Bai Xiaochun immediately ceased any motion of looking away. Instead, his eyes went wide as he glared right back at Du Lingfei. Staring contests didn't have anything to do with fighting and bloodshed, so from a young age, he had met few people who could overcome him.

Du Lingfei frowned. As for the admirers who clustered behind her, they were very irritated, and cast ferocious glares in his direction.

However, seeing so many eyes staring at him, and considering that quite a few of them were extremely fierce, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. He only had two eyes, so how could he possibly match up? “Well, they have numbers on their side, and besides, true men don't fight with girls.”

With a harrumph, he looked away.

About that time, Elder Sun's voice rang out across the arena.

“Very good, all of you. This competition has gone very well so far. And now, we will continue to narrow down the competitors. Would the five of you please step forward and select a marble. One of those marbles is a free pass into the top 3.” Smiling, Elder Sun produced the bag again.

This time, Chen Zi’ang was first. After pulling out the marble, he frowned; his marble had the number four written on it.

Du Lingfei was next, who got the number two marble. The other two Outer Sect disciple got numbers one and three respectively.

Bai Xiaochun didn’t even need to draw a marble; the remaining marble was the free pass.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes lit up, and he chuckled. He took his place outside of the fighting arena, arms folded, feeling completely relaxed as he prepared to watch Du Lingfei and all the others. He hadn’t even planned to continue on the with the competition, but now he didn’t have to do anything and he was already in the top 3.

“Luck is a big part of strength!” he thought, feeling quite pleased with himself.

That very luck caused quite a few audience members to stare at him with even stranger expressions on their faces. Most of them really couldn’t bear to accept the situation, especially the other disciples who had been eliminated, whose hearts were filled with jealousy and envy.

“This guy is totally shameless. Alright, fine, he used a magical item to get into the top five, but then he actually got a free pass into the top three!”

“How despicable. In fact, there’s never been someone as despicable as this to ever show up in the competitions.”



## Chapter 32: Heaven-Defying Luck

---

It wasn't just the audience. Even Du Lingfei was feeling a bit jealous of how lucky Bai Xiaochun had gotten. It was the same with Chen Zi'ang. The other four people who had reached the top 5 had all spend a lot of energy already. If they had managed to get the blank marble, it would have given them a bit of breathing room to rest, which would have been an immense advantage during the rest of the fighting.

Elder Sun looked at Bai Xiaochun and smiled, whereas Li Qinghou's expression remained the same as before.

Bai Xiaochun looked on excitedly as the next round of fighting began. Du Lingfei's opponent was a fierce disciple who frequently left the sect on missions to slay wild beasts, and was the type of person who was used to seeing a lot of bloodshed. On the other hand, Du Lingfei's skill with Lightness-in-Heaviness was quite fear-inspiring. Not only did it provide her with powerful defensive capabilities, but she was also able to move with incredible speed.

The audience was completely focused on the match, and occasional 'oohs' and 'ahs' could be heard. Both fighters were clearly in danger of being injured, and yet... there happened to be a certain voice calling out, taking the lead in the cheering.

“Whoah! Nice sword move!

“Look at that reverse Dragon Tail attack! Oh no! Look behind you! Quick, look behind you!

“Rah rah rah!” Bai Xiaochun was really getting sucked into watching the fight, to the point where he even started applauding at key points. It wasn’t an act either; he really was impressed by Du Lingfei’s performance, and by now, had forgotten that he was actually one of the competitors.

When Elder Sun saw what was happening, he coughed dryly. Li Qinghou’s face was completely expressionless, but inwardly all he could do was shrug his shoulders. After all, Bai Xiaochun had already accomplished the assigned task.

Facing such a powerful opponent, Du Lingfei had no time for distractions. She focused completely for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, and after using Lightness-in-Heaviness three times, she finally secured victory.

However, she ended up exhausting over half of her spiritual energy. Sweating, she was just about to walk out of the arena to rest up a bit, when she heard Bai Xiaochun cheering her on. Then she thought about how incredibly difficult it had been for her to get into the top 3, whereas Bai Xiaochun had done it without any effort at all. Irritation rose up in her heart, and she wished she could simply blast him with a powerful attack right then and there.

When Bai Xiaochun noticed that Du Lingfei was glaring at him angrily, he blinked a few times, feeling a bit offended. Then he glared back at her, which seemed to push Du Lingfei to the point where she almost couldn’t restrain herself from attacking.

Chen Zi'ang's next fight went a bit smoother. However, he still fought for about the time it takes half an incense stick to burn, and wasted quite a bit of spiritual energy.

He was also feeling quite envious of Bai Xiaochun.

“We now have a top 3. All three of you are Outer Sect... celebrities.” Elder Sun cleared his throat. “Please come to determine the fighting order. This time, the number three marble counts as the blank marble. Whoever picks it will advance directly to the final match.” Elder Sun waved his hand, causing the bag to appear once again.

Chen Zi'ang was the first in line this time, and when he pulled out the marble and saw the number ‘two’ written on it, he sighed and stepped off to the side.

Du Lingfei took a deep breath as she stepped forward. But then she stopped in place and turned icily to Bai Xiaochun.

“You go first!” she said coldly.

Bai Xiaochun, who had been watching the exciting fights this entire time, didn't refuse. He reached into the bag as Du Lingfei looked on with an icy expression. It wasn't just her that was waiting to see what would happen, all eyes in the audience were fixed upon Bai Xiaochun.

Even Elder Sun and Li Qinghou were craning their necks.

Being the focus of attention in this way caused Bai Xiaochun to feel a bit embarrassed. Actually, he didn't even really care which marble he pulled out, and yet when he finally did remove his hand, his eyes went wide with shock.

Number three.

Bai Xiaochun looked back at Du Lingfei, coughed dryly, and said, "Um, hey, you asked me to go first."

Eyes gleaming ferociously, Du Lingfei clenched her hands into fist and stared murderously at Bai Xiaochun. Her chest rose as she took a deep breath; she seemed to be on the verge of exploding.

Chen Zi'ang's eyes went wide, and his jaw dropped. The idea of someone being so incredibly lucky simply exceeded his imagination. Yet again... Bai Xiaochun would skip an entire match.

When the surrounding disciples saw the marble in Bai Xiaochun's hands, they couldn't restrain themselves. Instantly, a huge commotion broke out.

"He advances automatically again! His name is Bai Xiaochun, right? How... how could he be so lucky!? He got the blank marble twice in a row!"

"How shameless of this guy! He hasn't done anything, and yet has made it all the way to the final match...."

“How could a guy like that make it to the finals? Dammit, if I was as lucky as that, I could do the same thing!” Everyone was in an uproar, and the people who had been eliminated from the competition earlier seemed especially envious.

Elder Sun hesitated for a moment and then looked over at Li Qinghou. Li Qinghou let out a long sigh; he had to admit that Bai Xiaochun really had gotten lucky.

In Bai Xiaochun’s mind, there was no reason for the crowd to react in such a way. Smiling awkwardly, he hurried out of the arena, standing outside with an embarrassed look on his face.

“Ai. I was planning to concede anyway....” he thought, looking incredulously at the marble in his hand.

Du Lingfei took a deep breath to suppress her extreme irritation. Gritting her teeth, she looked at Chen Zi’ang, simultaneously settling her Qi and clearing her mind. She had done her homework on Chen Zi’ang, and knew that he was a very powerful opponent.

Chen Zi’ang smiled bitterly, taking a deep breath as he gazed back at Du Lingfei.

After staring off for a few breaths of time, they sprang into action. Almost instantly, booms and bangs began to ring out. This was actually the most spectacular fight in the entire competition so far. Chen Zi’ang erupted with his full power, going to the lengths of throwing out some seeds, which he then catalyzed into full-

grown plants with attack powers. When Bai Xiaochun saw him use his skill in plants and vegetation in such a way, his eyes glittered.

As for Du Lingfei, she used Lightness-in-Heaviness to send her flying sword whistling through the air. After they had fought for a bit, she then produced a wooden sword, which swirled about in conjunction with the ordinary flying sword, turning the battlefield into an even more spectacular scene than before.

The two of them couldn't keep using their trump cards for very long, and were rapidly running out of spiritual energy. The fighting only continued to grow more bitter.

Bai Xiaochun was watching excitedly, whooping and hollering the entire time.

The battle went on for about an hour, until a massive boom rang out as Du Lingfei pushed the wooden sword so hard that it exploded. The resulting fragments were then propelled by Lightness-in-Heaviness in a huge attack that Chen Zi'ang simply couldn't dodge. He was forced into retreat and ended up drawing on all of his spiritual energy. Finally, he sighed and conceded.

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples were quite impressed by the intense battle, and their eyes gleamed with admiration as they gazed at Du Lingfei. They were now fully convinced of how amazing she was. As for Chen Zi'ang, his reputation also improved because of the fight.

Even though he had lost, he was sure to become even more

famous in the days to come.

Elder Sun seemed quite pleased, and was even considering taking Du Lingfei on as a personal apprentice.

At the same time, no matter how the competition ended, Bai Xiaochun's name was also sure to spread....

The moment Chen Zi'ang called out that he conceded, Du Lingfei slumped in place in the middle of the arena, her face pale. She was swaying back and forth in exhaustion, her spiritual energy almost completely depleted. Taking a deep breath, she produced some medicinal pills which she instantly consumed. However, she knew that the pills would only replenish so much, and she could only recover completely by sitting cross-legged in meditation for several hours. After all, she had just fought four battles in a row.

However, according to the rules of this type of competition, the disciples were not given very much time for rest. After all, it was only a small-scale competition.

"Bai Xiaochun, get out here!" Du Lingfei said through gritted teeth. Her eyes gleamed with a ferocious light as she looked at Bai Xiaochun standing outside of the arena. She wanted to take advantage of the little bit of spiritual energy she had to defeat this damnable Bai Xiaochun, who had gotten into the final match only by pure luck.

As soon as the words left Du Lingfei's mouth, everyone in the audience turned to look at Bai Xiaochun, eager to gloat in his

misfortune. In their minds, even if Du Lingfei was bone tired, Bai Xiaochun had only achieved victory by random chance, and she would be able to defeat him easily no matter the circumstances.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then looked at Du Lingfei standing there unsteadily, and suddenly realized that he... could actually take 1st place.

“This is the time for Bai Xiaochun to finally become super famous. Once I go out there and use my Lightness-in-Heaviness, then everyone is going to be completely shocked.” Puffing his chest out proudly, he strode into the arena, envisioning the scene of everyone reacting in shock to his win.

However, the instant his foot touched down, Du Lingfei’s eyes flickered coldly, and she suddenly performed an incantation gesture and pointed out. Instantly, her flying sword shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

A brutal air emanated off of the flying sword, sending intense coldness out in all directions. Clearly this one attack was backed by all of the spiritual energy Du Lingfei could muster, causing the sword to emanate incredible pressure.

Even more shocking was that Du Lingfei flew into the air behind the sword, almost as if she were about to merge with it and become one.

A boom rang out as the sword accelerated toward Bai Xiaochun with shocking speed, a speed that vastly exceeded the speed she



had used when fighting Chen Zi'ang. A piercing whistling sound echoed out as it became a prismatic beam that bore down on Bai Xiaochun.

Everyone watching was completely shocked by the sword move, and began to cry out in shock.

“Solitary Sword, Flying Immortal!!”

“I can't believe Elder Sister Du is actually using that sword incantation!!”

Elder Sun's eyes gleamed brightly, and Li Qinghou nodded. Both of them could tell that Du Lingfei had actually never successfully pulled off this sword incantation. However, at this point in the battle, when her spiritual energy was virtually depleted, she managed to succeed. Using her last bit of energy, she just barely managed to unleash the sword incantation.

“By putting everything on the line, she gained enlightenment of the sword incantation,” Li Qinghou said, eyes gleaming with admiration. “This Du Lingfei isn't bad. She actually seems more suited to the cultivation of Green Crest Peak.”

All of the Outer Sect disciples were completely shaken. Everything seemed to turn into a blur, except for Du Lingfei and her flying sword, which merged together into a picture of perfect clarity.

The sword whistled through the air, followed by the sword wielder, becoming a powerful attack. Du Lingfei looked exhausted, but her eyes gleamed with a sharp light. She was extremely confident that this sword move would secure her the victory.

In almost the exact same instant that the flying sword and Du Lingfei closed in on Bai Xiaochun, Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted. Rumbling sounds then echoed out as all of his numerous defensive assets erupted out layer by layer, including the jade pendant and all the amulets. At the same time, he flew backward at top speed.

The flying sword was clearly not an ordinary object, and it quickly began to pierce through the shields. It stabbed through layer after layer, collapsing all the defensive shields until it actually reached Bai Xiaochun himself.

However, by that point, it didn't seem to have much energy left. Before it could actually stab into him, it got stuck. Even as he flew backward, the sword keeping pace, it was possible to see the layers of leather clothing he was wearing.

When the audience realized this, their jaws dropped, and they gasped.

“B-Bai Xiaochun... has so many defenses!!”

“How terrified of dying is this guy? Is it really worth it? He actually used magical items and talismans for a little competition like this? And on top of all that he wore leather armor!?!?”

Du Lingfei's face was pale white as she watched Bai Xiaochun running away like a rabbit whose tail had just been stepped on. Not only was he moving with incredible speed, her sword was still stuck in his clothing. Gritting her teeth, she performed an incantation gesture and pointed out in an attempt to drag the flying sword back to her. However, she had so little spiritual energy that all she could do was make it tremble a bit.

She tried one last time, but even as she tried to circulate her spiritual energy, blood began to ooze out of the corners of her mouth, and she staggered backward several paces, where she stood unsteadily for a moment before dropping down to sit on the ground. Her face was deathly pale, and her spiritual energy was completely drained.

In her heart, she felt that it was a big injustice. She had struggled so hard to get into the top 2, whereas Bai Xiaochun had done almost nothing. In fact, he hadn't even used any of his spiritual energy. Her irritation quickly turned into rage; gritted her teeth, she stared murderously at Bai Xiaochun, wishing she could kill him several times over. In fact, if she had the energy, she would go over and bite him.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath as he sped backward in retreat; he had never imagined that Du Lingfei would actually use a move like the one she had.

Unexpectedly, all of his defenses had been pierced.

“Fudge, it’s a good thing I was thinking straight and put on eight leather jackets.” He looked down at the flying sword sticking into his shoulder. It was now completely devoid of any energy, and was stuck fast within all the layers of leather. By the time it actually reached his skin, it had nothing left to push it any further.

Furthermore, thanks to his Undying Skin, when it actually touched him, it didn’t even match up to a mosquito bite.

Fear lingering in his heart, Bai Xiaochun eyed the sword and then carefully pulled it out. Then he glanced over at Du Lingfei, who was sitting there gasping for breath.

“Elder Sister, you really shouldn’t throw your treasures around like this. Do you want this sword or not? If you don’t want it, then I’ll take it.” Looking extremely pleased, he put the flying sword into his bag of holding, then took out his own little wooden sword. Just as he was about to launch an attack, people in the crowd began to cry out in alarm.

Seeing Bai Xiaochun take her flying sword caused Du Lingfei’s eyes to be shot with blood.

“You....” she said. Just as she was about to flip out completely, she passed out.

She was the second person in the competition to faint because of Bai Xiaochun.

“Eee? What did you go and faint for?” Bai Xiaochun looked at the unconscious Du Lingfei, and then back at his little wooden sword. Finally, he shrugged.

## Chapter 33: Disqualify Bai Xiaochun!

---

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples, especially the ones who had been eliminated from the competition early on, glared at Bai Xiaochun angrily. Many people even began to shout out.

“Shameless! You are completely shameless, Bai Xiaochun!”

“Winning that way doesn’t count and we all know it!!”

“Disqualify him!”

Everyone joined together in their rage, causing Bai Xiaochun to instantly grow jumpy with fear. He also realized that showing off his Lightness-in-Heaviness ability wouldn’t abate the crowd’s fury, and in fact, could potentially lead to worse consequences, and cause them to call him even more shameless.... Instead, he turned to look at Elder Sun.

“Elder Sun, I got 1st place, right? Could you go ahead and announce it?”

Elder Sun smiled wryly in response. As for Li Qinghou, he sighed; how could he ever have imagined that requiring Bai Xiaochun join the competition would result in him taking 1st place?

Elder Sun shook his head and chuckled. “Uh... well I guess I might as well. Bai Xiaochun has taken 1st place in the competition!”

In response, everyone stared furiously at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was of the opinion that he was actually pretty powerful, but considering how many people there were... his heart began to prickle with fear. Just when he was about step out of the arena and leave this dangerous location, Du Lingfei, with the help of some bystanders, regained consciousness and sat back up. Panting, she glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun, gritted her teeth, and then cried, “Bai Xiaochun, I refuse to admit defeat!

“You might have taken 1st place, but that’s only because I let you have it. And that doesn’t change how much I hate you. Do you dare to have another fight!?”

Bai Xiaochun gave a sarcastic chuckle and kept walking. In his mind, he would be crazy to fight with this deranged woman again. Besides, what would happen if she passed out again?

“I won’t fight you with magic,” she continued. “Besides, as Outer Sect disciples, we’re both apprentice apothecaries of Fragrant Cloud Peak. Why don’t we compete in skill with plants and vegetation?!” Du Lingfei glared at Bai Xiaochun the entire time, and when she spoke, her words were spoken slowly and decisively.

“If you win, you can keep that Pinewood Sword of amine. But if you don’t agree, then you’ll regret it!”

Bai Xiaochun stopped walking. Having heard skill with plants

and vegetation mentioned, he couldn't help but turn his head to look back at Du Lingfei.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had stopped and was apparently hesitating, she resisted the impulse to unleash a savage attack, and quickly continued, "Bai Xiaochun, if you can defeat me in terms of skill with plants and vegetation, then you can even have this Cloudsoaring Incense!" With that, she produced a stick of bluish-purple incense.

As soon as the incense appeared, it began to pulse with spiritual energy, and the surrounding Outer Sect disciples' eyes instantly gleamed with envy.

"A tier-1 spirit medicine! Cloudsoaring Incense... it's a really remarkable tier-1 spirit medicine. Definitely very expensive, and useful for anyone under the seventh level of Qi Condensation!"

"Du Lingfei must have spent a lot of merit points on that in preparation for breaking out of the fifth level of Qi Condensation...."

"Elder Sister Du's skill with plants and vegetation got her into the top 20 of the first three stone steles outside the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion. Bai Xiaochun is definitely going to lose!"

Bai Xiaochun instantly recognized the Cloudsoaring Incense, which he had read about when studying the introduction to Cloudsoaring Grass in the third volume of plants and vegetation. He was instantly moved, and that was even before he heard



everyone mention that Du Lingfei was only in the top 20 on the stones steles, after which his eyes gleamed.

Taking a few steps back, he stammered, “Y-you’re... you’re really in the top 20 on the stone steles of plants and vegetation?”

He actually just wanted to confirm that what he had overheard just now was true.

“Are you going to compete or not!?” Du Lingfei said through gritted teeth.

“But I’ve only studied the first three volumes about plants and vegetation....” he said hesitantly.

“That’s what I’m talking about! Compete with me in the first three volumes! Come on, I dare you!” Du Lingfei was so angry she felt like she was about to explode.

“Fine... I’ll compete!” he said. “Happy?” Although he looked as though he wanted to cry, inwardly, his heart was blooming with flowers of joy. He couldn’t help but think that this girl really was a bit dim-witted.

As soon as the crowd heard Bai Xiaochun’s words, they began to boo and heckle him. Du Lingfei took a deep breath, sucking in quite a bit of spiritual energy, which stabilized her a bit. Glaring angrily at Bai Xiaochun, she stalked forward to Elder Sun, then clasped hands and bowed.

“Elder, Disciple Du Lingfei requests that you bear official witness to a battle of plants and vegetation between myself and Bai Xiaochun.”

Elder Sun’s opinion of Du Lingfei was increasing by the moment. He stroked his beard for a moment before smiling and saying, “Very well. I shall bear witness. However, since we are speaking of skill with plants and vegetation, perhaps it would be better for the Peak Lord to decide the nature of the challenges.”

He looked over at Li Qinghou. Li Qinghou looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, then nodded.

The surrounding disciples were now quite excited, as was Du Lingfei, who turned to Li Qinghou, clasped hands and bowed.

Bai Xiaochun was also very pleased that he wouldn’t have to engage in any dangerous fighting to make a name for himself. He stood there, no longer looking like he was about to cry, but rather, with jaw jutting out, looking arrogantly out at the crowd in the same way a Chosen would. Du Lingfei snorted coldly.

At this point, Li Qinghou glanced at Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei, then began to speak, his voice cool, “The Dao of plants and vegetation is unpredictable. Although we will limit things to the first three volumes, those volumes contain numerous variables. Today I will present you with two challenges. We shall see which of the two of you can secure victory.” With that, he tapped his bag of holding and produced two seeds.

“These two flower seeds can be catalyzed with spiritual energy. The level of your skill with plants and vegetation will determine how many petals the resulting spirit flowers have. This is how we will decide the winner of the first round.” Li Qinghou waved his hand, sending the two seeds flying to Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei respectively.

Du Lingfei caught the seed without any hesitation. At the same time, Li Qinghou sent a medicinal pill flying her way, which she also caught, a look of shock appearing on her face.

“Take that pill to restore your cultivation base,” Li Qinghou said calmly. Du Lingfei’s face lit up. After expressing her thanks, she consumed the pill. After a few breaths of time passed, she trembled, and her eyes began to shine brightly; her cultivation base had been completely restored.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t very happy with that, but he didn’t dare to say anything. Instead, he looked down at the spirit seed lying in his palm, and began to study it closely.

“Don’t recognize it?” Du Lingfei said, sneering. “Well I can tell you that it’s a Bluespirit Thistle seed.” With that, she completely ignored Bai Xiaochun, closing her eyes and circulating her spiritual energy, which she then poured into the seed in her hand.

Almost immediately, an emerald green sprout climbed up from the seed. It grew rapidly until it was about one-third of a meter tall. Then, it bloomed with a blue spirit flower, and began to grow

even taller.

Bai Xiaochun looked over at what was happening, and then turned his attention back to the seed, which he continued to study thoughtfully.

Li Qinghou was watching Bai Xiaochun the whole time, and soon, a virtually undetectable flicker of surprise could be seen deep in his eyes.

While Bai Xiaochun stood there thinking, all of the surrounding Outer Sect disciples were watching Du Lingfei. The plant in her hand was already two thirds of a meter tall, and already had a second flower.

By the time Bai Xiaochun sent some spiritual energy into the seed, Du Lingfei's spirit plant had already sprouted with three flowers. Bai Xiaochun didn't maintain a steady flow of spiritual energy, but rather, sent it in fits and bursts. In fact, when the seed sprouted, he even blew the first few sprouts away with a breath of air.

After enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, Du Lingfei's face was ashen, and she was gritting her teeth. With her final bit of energy, she caused a sixth blue flower to sprout, after which she breathed a sigh of relief. Placing the plant down next to her, she clasped hands and bowed to Li Qinghou.

Li Qinghou nodded. "Six spirit flowers, all of them superior-grade. Nice job."

Feeling very pleased with herself, Du Lingfei looked over at Bai Xiaochun. When she saw that his spirit plant wasn't even one third of a meter tall yet, her sneer widened.

The surrounding outer Sect disciples were getting very excited.

“Elder Sister Du definitely deserves her reputation. That Bluespirit Thistle bloomed with six flowers. That's incredible! Bai Xiaochun hasn't even caused one flower to bloom. He's completely good for nothing.”

“A competition of plant catalysis first involves studying the seed, and then using unique catalysis methods to cause it to grow. In that regard, Elder Sister Du is really at the head of the pack.”

In the middle of all the conversations, Bai Xiaochun's spirit plant gradually reached a height of one third of a meter. Next, a somewhat shrivelled blue flower appeared. Compared to Du Lingfei's flowers, it looked rather malnourished, and even elicited some laughs from the crowd. But then, all of a sudden, a second blue flower appeared on the short plant. Next was a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh....

In the space of a few breaths, Bai Xiaochun's spirit plant bloomed with nine flowers!!

This instantly led to widespread shock and disbelief.

Du Lingfei was staring at what to her was a completely unimaginable scene. “Bluespirit Thistle blooms with one flower every third meter. How could this plant have nine flowers when it’s only a third of a meter tall!”

However, things weren’t over yet. Even as the nine small blue flowers appeared, Bai Xiaochun closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and then suddenly exhaled sharply. That one breath contained spiritual energy which settled onto the nine flowers and, in the blink of an eye, caused them to begin to shiver and change colors. No longer were they blue, but rather, indigo!

Indigo starts out as blue, but its color is deeper and more profound!

This is a common Chinese expression to express how something that comes after/from something else, is superior

As soon as people realized what was happening, their eyes went wide with astonishment.

“That’s... that’s not a Bluespirit Thistle!!”

“Indigospirit Thistle! It’s Indigospirit Thistle, the seed of which is very difficult to distinguish from that of the Bluespirit Thistle! In fact, if you use the catalysis method for Bluespirit Thistle in Indigospirit Thistle, you’ll actually produce a Bluespirit Thistle, except you’ll have wasted the seed!”

Everyone was shocked, and were staring at Bai Xiaochun in disbelief.

Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, then placed the Indigospirit Thistle off to the side. Chuckling sarcastically, he clasped his hands behind his back and looked at Du Lingfei.

His skill with plants and vegetation had already reached an indescribable level. After studying the seed for a while, he had noticed the differences, and was easily able to tell what type of seed it was.

Du Lingfei's face flickered; to her, it felt as if someone had just slapped her across the face. She staggered backward a few steps, looking first at her Bluespirit Thistle and then at Bai Xiaochun's Indigospirit Thistle. Suddenly, her face flushed with heat. Earlier, she had berated Bai Xiaochun for his lack of knowledge, but then, moments later, he had proven definitively that she had wasted the seed.

"This Bai Xiaochun is definitely extremely lucky," she thought, grinding her teeth. "I assumed it was a Bluespirit Thistle, and he guessed that it was an Indigospirit Thistle. Well, that was just a lucky chance on his part, not him actually identifying the seed!"

"Bai Xiaochun takes the first round," Li Qinghou said coolly. "That truly was the seed of an Indigospirit Thistle, not a Bluespirit Thistle. They look similar, but some of the veins grow differently. Without studying it down to the finest detail, it's easy to confuse them." Looking over at Bai Xiaochun, he waved his hand again, causing a spirit plant to appear.

It was a very unique, with four colors, and nine leaves of different shapes. It also had two flowers on it, one black and one white. The flowers almost seemed in sentient, as they were constantly struggling with each other, as if they wanted to suppress each other. Although the plant seemed like one single plant, if you looked closely you would see the signs that it had been grafted together.

“The first round was dedicated to catalysis. As for the second round, it will focus on identification. This particular spirit plant has been grafted together from numerous other plants. Whichever of you can correctly guess the greatest number of graft materials... will be the winner.”

Li Qinghou sent the grafted plant floating out in front of him, then looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Considering he had brought Bai Xiaochun into the sect, he was very curious to see what other surprising things he could do.

Du Lingfei gritted her teeth. In her mind, she had just been careless moments ago. Now, she was unprecedentedly focused. Taking out a jade slip, she walked up to the spirit plant.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes gleamed with interest as he also stepped forward and began to examine the plant, occasionally making notations in a jade slip. A moment later, Du Lingfei stepped back, rubbing the bridge of her nose. Then she looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a grim expression on her face. She had identified eight types of plants. The others were types she didn't recognize.

However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't finished. His eyes were glowing



even more brightly as he buzzed around the plant in circles. Occasionally he even cried out in surprise, as if he had just noticed something very interesting.

“Wow, you can do that!?”

“Well this... this is very interesting!”

The crowd looked on silently. None of them believed that Bai Xiaochun could identify any of the plants, and in fact, most of them were convinced that the reason he had catalyzed the Indigospirit Thistle was simply luck.

“Faker!” Du Lingfei thought. “Yeah, you just keep on faking it!” Inwardly, she was starting to feel uneasy, and her hatred for Bai Xiaochun only continued to grow.

Enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, and Bai Xiaochun was still going. He really was completely absorbed in what he was doing, and had even forgotten that he was in a competition. Seeing a grafted plant like this had seemingly opened up a huge door in his mind regarding skill with plants and vegetation. All of a sudden, he realized that the tens of thousands of medicinal plants he was familiar with were not just useful on their own, but could actually be mixed together.

Eventually, he backed up reluctantly, eyes shining with fascination and admiration.

Li Qinghou and Elder Sun exchanged a glance, and then Li Qinghou said, “Very well. The time has come to reveal which spirit plants you’ve identified. Du Lingfei, you go first.”

Du Lingfei gritted her teeth, then pulled out her jade slip and began to speak.

“I saw eight types of plants, including Waterheaven Rhubarb, Coldsole Root, Earthdragon Fruit, Dawnfog Lichen....” She continued on until she reached the final medicinal plant. “Sealwort Flower!” With that, Du Lingfei looked over at Bai Xiaochun, certain that he would never be able to surpass her. Of course, although eight didn’t seem like a lot, it was an incredibly difficult task to identify the various elements of a perfectly grafted medicinal plant like this. Eight was actually quite a bit.

“Hmph. If Bai Xiaochun is shameless enough to say the same eight plants,” she said coldly, “then we can consult the jade slips as proof!”

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, looked around, then flicked his sleeve and pulled out the jade slip that held his notes.

“Let’s forget the eight plants that Elder Sister Du mentioned. Other than those, I saw a total of 67 types of medicinal plants. Unfortunately, there were 31 that I couldn’t identify. That means that in the end, I identified 36.” His words instantly sent the surrounding disciples into an uproar.

“36? How is that possible!”

“Seven or eight should be the limit. How could he possibly have identified dozens?!”

Du Lingfei glared coldly at Bai Xiaochun. She simply didn't believe his words, and assumed that he was going to just randomly guess the types of plants.

“Junior Brother Bai,” she said sarcastically, “why don't you just say there were 30,000 types of plants. That would cover everything in the third volume of plants and vegetation, so at least you would be certain of guessing a few right.”

# Chapter 34: Crushing It In Plants And Vegetation

---

All of the Outer Sect disciples in the audience snickered in response to what Du Lingfei had just said. None of them believed that Bai Xiaochun's skill with plants and vegetation could possibly match up to hers.

That was especially true after hearing the last thing he said, which seemed completely unbelievable. Obviously, Bai Xiaochun was just going to blindly guess at the grafted plants.

“If Bai Xiaochun really can identify all those types of plants, then his skill with the plants and vegetation of the first three volumes would put him on the same level as Elder Sister Zhou Xinqi! How could that be possible!?”

“Ah, he's just being cryptic to confuse everyone. This guy is so annoying! At least he'll finally be exposed as a fraud!”

As everyone jeered and mocked Bai Xiaochun, he stood there, frowning slightly.

“Are you people finished yet?” he said, his expression ice cold, true anger finally burning in his heart. If this were a combat situation, he wouldn't feel like that. But considering his grand aspiration of becoming a master apothecary, for people to doubt his abilities with plants and vegetation was a huge insult.

“You can say I’m just lucky, and you can say I won because of my magical items. But when it comes to the Dao of plants and vegetation, don’t think that your superficial knowledge enables you to see the length and breadth of Heaven and Earth!”

When his voice echoed out, solemn and serious, his slight frame suddenly seemed more like a towering mountain. The cold way he looked at the Outer Sect disciples caused their laughter to turn into stares of shock.

Even Du Lingfei was taken aback. The Bai Xiaochun in front of her right now seemed like a completely different person than the one from before.

Bai Xiaochun snorted coldly and then flicked his sleeve. Abandoning his normally charming yet aggravating demeanor, he stood with his hands clasped behind his back, looked around coldly, and then began to speak, radiating a strange, indescribable energy. “This spirit plant, which I’ll tentatively refer to as a Black-White Orchid, contains Goldsilver Root, Heavenvellow Leaf, Watery Netgrass, Ninelands Fruit, Spiral Pulp, Bordercloud Bloom, Searchwind Stalk, Yang-Soaking Fruit....”

As he continued to speak, that energy grew stronger and stronger, leading to strange expressions on the faces of the spectators.

That was especially true of Du Lingfei, whose frown deepened as she looked over at the spirit plant. She was familiar with all of the medicinal plants that Bai Xiaochun referenced, which were indeed from the first three volumes of plants and vegetation, and yet she

couldn't see any evidence whatsoever that they existed within the grafted plant.

Du Lingfei snorted, still completely unconvinced that Bai Xiaochun was actually identifying the grafted plants. "Seems like you really are just going to recite a bunch of random plants from the first three volumes of plants and vegetation. If you can actually recite all of those plants from memory, then I guess I'll have lost, and in fact, I'll admit defeat."

Everyone began to once again ridicule and mock Bai Xiaochun.

"Yeah, that's right. If you're good enough, then why don't you recite the entire first three volumes of plants and vegetation!? Then you'll definitely win!"

"Trying to seem cryptic, huh? Superficial knowledge? The length and breadth of Heaven and Earth? You're the one with the superficial knowledge. If you don't recognize the plants, just say so. There's no need to try to pull a fast one. How despicable!"

Bai Xiaochun looked coldly at Du Lingfei, then back at the crowd. Then he laughed, looked back at the plant, and continued, "Grow Hundredgrass Root for thirty years until it becomes fullgrown Hundredgrass. Remove the stalks and veins, roast them, then soak them in spirit water. After that, graft them onto Skybleak Leaf, and you end up with this distinctive spotting pattern." Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, causing a slight gust of wind to lift up one of the leaves on the plant, revealing a distinctive spotting pattern.

“Nine Skybleak Leaves have been combined into a single leaf, and then fed Whiteburn Flowers as they grew. You can see that right here!

“Whiteburn Flowers only bloom once they reach one hundred years of age. When they do, you have only one hundred breaths of time to graft them onto a Clover Ginseng, which you can use to feed the Skybleak Leaf. This white flower here is obviously a Whiteburn Flower!

“Clover Ginseng, when roasted with spirit fire, eventually withers, infusing the ginseng with the essence of the leaves. That will then aid in the growth of Flatshell Seed, and the two can be combined!

“Then, that Flatshell Seed....” As Bai Xiaochun spoke, he gestured grandiosely, pointing out the various parts of the spirit plant which contained the evidence he referred to. His descriptions were very precise, and even included the various techniques involved. Soon, the looks of scorn faded away, and everyone began to breathe heavily. Faces fell, and eventually, all the Outer Sect disciple had looks of disbelief on their faces. There were even some people who cried out aloud with shock.

“This is impossible!!”

“Heavens, how could he be doing this!?”

Each and every statement uttered by Bai Xiaochun was like an

invisible palm slapping these people. After all, all of them were apprentice apothecaries. Earlier, they hadn't been able to see through the secrets hidden in the spirit plant, but with Bai Xiaochun's detailed explanation, all of a sudden, it seemed to make more sense.

Everything Bai Xiaochun said was correct, and complete. His performance was a like a huge slap in the face to all of the Outer Sect disciples.

“I can't believe that this Bai Xiaochun... has such shocking skill with plants and vegetation!!” The Outer Sect disciples felt like explosions were going off in their hearts. Their previous ridicule and mockery now caused their faces to burn so hot it hurt.

Even more astonishing was that his explanations were obviously inferred in reverse. He was able to discern the grafting method merely by looking at the grafted plant; only someone with an unbelievably advanced skill with plants and vegetation could do something like that.

Even Elder Sun's eyes were wide with disbelief. “He's inferring everything in reverse! He... he understands plants and vegetation to an incredible degree....

“He's only an apprentice apothecary, and yet he is able to analyze a spirit plant grafted by the Peak Lord himself. This... this....”

As for Li Qinghou, his eyes were shining brightly; he almost couldn't believe he was looking at the same Bai Xiaochun he knew



from before.

Du Lingfei's face was ashen, and she staggered backward. Based on her skill with plants and vegetation, as soon as she heard Bai Xiaochun's explanation, she knew that he was right. In fact, at a few points during his speech, she didn't even understand what he was saying. By this point, she was feeling completely and utterly embarrassed.

Currently, Bai Xiaochun wasn't using any sort of magical technique. However, every statement he made was backed by his understanding of plants and vegetation, and became like divine abilities or magical items. Du Lingfei was simply incapable of processing what was happening. She felt like lightning was crashing around in her mind, and she backed further and further away, her face growing even more pale.

"Flaming Crow-dipper and Nineflames Sky can be used to make the spirit bulblets impervious to strong sunlight. Merge them into Crow-dipper Fruit, and it will give birth to Blackskull Lily! That is the last of the spirit plants that I recognize." It took Bai Xiaochun about half the time it takes an incense stick to burn to finish his explanation. His eyes flashed like lightning as he scanned the crowd and then eventually looked straight at Du Lingfei.

"Elder Sister Du. Ladies and gentlemen of the sect. The Dao of plants and vegetation is deep and profound, and contains no absolutes. Were that not the case, it would be impossible for you to make any progress with your skill with plants and vegetation. And yet, you actually want me to list out all of the plants in the first three volumes of plants and vegetation. What's so hard about

that?!” Setting his jaw, he flicked his sleeve and began to recite.

“Spiritwinter Bamboo....

“Earthdragon Fruit....

“Inkroot....” His voice was clear and his expression tranquil as he spoke. Complete silence filled the arena. As his words echoed out, they were like a huge invisible hand smacking everyone a second time.

Everyone present was filled with profound shame, and gasps could be heard. Some people even pulled out jade slips with information about plants and vegetation, which they compared with what Bai Xiaochun was saying. Soon, they began to tremble, and their shock increased.

Du Lingfei’s face was deathly pale as she backed up, looking at Bai Xiaochun as if he were a ghost.

The reason she had spoken such snide words earlier was because she had never seen anyone actually recite 30,000 different types of medicinal plants. To her, it seemed like an impossibility. If someone was actually able to do that, then they had to already possess completely Heaven-defying skill with plants and vegetation.

As time passed, Bai Xiaochun spoke more and more quickly. With almost a single breath, [he talked for two hours straight](#). To the

audience, it almost seemed like no time had gone by at all, and virtually everyone had taken out jade slips to study along with Bai Xiaochun's recitation.

Okay so I did the math, and for him to recite 30,000 words in two hours would require him to say over four plants per second. The [fastest talker in the world](#) can speak about eight words per second, so it's not impossible!

After two hours, he finished reciting all of the medicinal plants. Then, there was deathly silence for a moment, followed by an explosive outburst that was audible even outside of the arena.

“Heavens.... Not a single mistake! He was completely correct.... I can't believe I just witnessed this happen!!”

“All 30,000 medicinal plants.... Bai Xiaochun's skill with plants and vegetation is simply shocking. Wait... what is his ranking on the stone steles of plants and vegetation?”

“For Du Lingfei to compete with Bai Xiaochun in skill with plants and vegetation is like throwing an egg at a rock!”

As the uproar went on, Du Lingfei looked at Bai Xiaochun with increasing bitterness. Her reaction to losing in the fight hadn't lead to a feeling like this. But right now, in terms of skill with plants and vegetation, she had been utterly and thoroughly defeated.

How could she ever have imagined that Bai Xiaochun, with his incredible luck and multitude of magical items, would actually be

so monumentally ahead of her in skill with plants and vegetation?

It was a huge blow to her, and she couldn't help but laugh bitterly. She threw the Cloudsoaring Incense over, then turned and fled the arena. It was simply impossible for her to even consider staying, considering how embarrassed she was.

Now that Du Lingfei was gone, the other surrounding Outer Sect disciples started to feel even more embarrassed. They quickly clasped hands and bowed to Bai Xiaochun, then hurried off. It was easy to imagine how long the profound shock they felt would last.

Soon, the arena was virtually empty. Bai Xiaochun was the only one left behind, coughing dryly. He realized... that he had really done it this time. Putting the Cloudsoaring Incense away, he looked over cautiously at Li Qinghou.

“Apprentice... will take off now,” he said, turning and leaving so fast that he almost left behind a dust cloud.

Elder Sun watched Bai Xiaochun leaving, and his the shock in his eyes was still evident.

“Peak Lord, this kid... is outstanding!” he said softly.

Li Qinghou threw his head back and laughed loudly, then waved his sleeve and shot back up toward the top of the mountain.

# Chapter 35: Another Encounter With Xu Baocai

---

It only took about half a month for the news about Bai Xiaochun crushing Du Lingfei in the competition to spread among virtually all the disciples, and cause a huge commotion throughout the entire sect.

Whenever Bai Xiaochun went out, the Outer Sect disciples he encountered would call out cheerful greetings. For the first time in his life, Bai Xiaochun felt famous. Now, he enjoyed leaving his residence. He would even approach random people and start to chat with them, all in the hopes that they would ask who he was, whereupon he would proudly reveal his name.

Bai Xiaochun really enjoyed living such a luxurious life. He also performed a threefold spirit enhancement on Du Lingfei's incense. Utilizing that incense then pushed him from the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation all the way into the sixth level.

As far as his Lightness-in-Heaviness magic, the more he practiced with it, the more refined it became. In fact, he had even begun to probe the second level of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, which was Heaviness-in-Lightness.

Although it seemed incredibly difficult at first, after numerous attempts, he made a bit of progress.

On one particular day, he was seated cross-legged in his courtyard, practicing Heaviness-in-Lightness, when suddenly his

expression flickered. Putting away his wooden sword, he looked up at the main gate of the courtyard. A moment later, someone knocked.

“Elder Brother Bai, are you home?” After hearing the familiar voice, Bai Xiaochun’s brow furrowed slightly. People didn’t often come to visit him in his courtyard. He waved his finger toward the gate, which creaked open to slowly reveal a gaunt young man.

He wore the garments of an Outer Sect disciple, and his expression was very serious as he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Xu Baocai offers greetings, Elder Brother Bai.”

“What are you doing here?” Bai Xiaochun asked, looking shocked. This young man was the very same Xu Baocai with whom he had fought back in the Ovens, when he was in the third level of Qi Condensation. Apparently, Xu Baocai was now an Outer Sect disciple.

After seeing that Xu Baocai was still in the third level of Qi Condensation, however, he felt much more relaxed. Putting a very stern expression on his face, he said, “What, now that you’re an Outer Sect disciple you refuse to let bygones be bygones? You still want to fight me?”

Xu Baocai immediately shook his head. A wry smile on his face, he once again bowed to Bai Xiaochun.

“I was ignorant and foolish back then. Please don’t ridicule me, Elder Brother Bai. I’ve come today to apologize for what happened. Let’s forget about all that.” Xu Baocai seemed very earnest about wanting to forget about everything that had gone on. After all, now that he was an Outer Sect disciple, past matters weren’t really very important.

The most important thing was that Bai Xiaochun was now very famous on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Now that Xu Baocai was an Outer Sect disciple on that very same mountain, he obviously wanted to avoid any complications that could arise because of the past.

Bai Xiaochun blinked, thinking back to everything that had happened back then in the Ovens. In some ways, Xu Baocai counted as an old friend. He quickly rose to his feet and invited Xu Baocai in, whereupon they sat down and began to reminisce.

Thinking back to that unforgettable Blood Notice, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but ask, “Now that you mention it, back then, I really didn’t understand why you would write the character ‘die’ so many times with blood. Eventually I got it, but even then, I was always curious; didn’t it hurt to use so much blood to write so many characters?”

Xu Baocai’s face flushed with embarrassment when he thought back to his outlandish behavior back then, and he quickly changed the subject.

“Elder Brother Bai, you need to be careful about the people from the Supervisor’s Department. I heard that Chen Fei and the others who you forced into the Outer Sect have been harboring a grudge

this entire time.”

“Chen Fei?” Bai Xiaochun’s heart instantly filled with vigilance as he thought back to that burly, muscular man from the Supervisor’s Department.

“What level is his cultivation base now?” he asked, looking very serious.

“I heard he’s in the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation,” Xu Baocai replied immediately, hoping that revealing these matters to Bai Xiaochun would clear the air between them.

When Bai Xiaochun heard the fourth level of Qi Condensation mentioned, he felt a bit better, and actually looked even calmer than before.

Xu Baocai didn’t go into further explanations. He and Bai Xiaochun began to chat about the sect, and soon Bai Xiaochun realized that Xu Baocai actually knew a lot more than he did. He seemed to be in the know regarding just about everything that occurred on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect. He knew about the big events and the inconsequential matters, and had even heard about things that were supposed to be big secrets. Eventually they started talking about the latest gossip, and the discussion got even more lively.

“Elder Brother Bai, did you know there are five beauties here in the Spirit Stream Sect, each one of them astonishingly good-



looking? Cultivators like us who could be with even one of them would be able to live life without regrets.”

Bai Xiaochun’s interest was piqued, so he asked Xu Baocai to explain further.

Bai Xiaochun wanted to hear, and this was a subject Xu Baocai loved talking about, so his eyebrows instantly shot up with excitement.

“The five beauties are virtually on equal footing when it comes to how pretty they are. However, their positions within the sect are all different. In first place is Xu Meixiang, Master-Aunt Xu, who is truly ethereally beautiful and alluring.... Oh, right, she’s Big Fatty Zhang’s Master.”

“Really?” Bai Xiaochun was truly shocked to hear this news. Big Fatty Zhang had mentioned his Master on several occasions, and had always called her an old shrew. Then he thought back to how skinny Big Fatty Zhang had been when they reunited, and how it was because that old shrew hated fat people.

All of a sudden, things made more sense to Bai Xiaochun. Clearing his throat, and his mind, he decided not to think about the matter further. It was simply too dangerous.

“The next two in the rankings are actually from Fragrant Cloud Peak. The first is Zhou Xinqi, Elder Sister Zhou, and then Du Lingfei, Elder Sister Du.” Xu Baocai was explaining everything he knew, so when he brought up Zhou Xinqi, it also necessitated

talking about Chosen.

“Elder Brother Bai, you probably already know that on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect, there are three great Chosen. One of them is Zhou Xinqi from our Fragrant Cloud Peak. Another is [Lu Tianlei](#) from Violet Cauldron Peak, and the last is... [Shangguan Tianyou](#) from Green Crest Peak! All three of them are consummate geniuses!” Xu Baocai’s eyes gleamed with envy.

Lu Tianlei’s name in Chinese is 吕天磊 lǚ tiān lěi. Lu is a common surname, Tian means “Heaven” or “sky.” Lei means “rocky” or “uneven.” Shangguan Tianyou’s name in Chinese is 上官天佑 shàngguān tiānyòu. Shangguan is a relatively uncommon two-character surname. Tian means “Heaven” or “sky.” Yu means “blessed” or “protected.” Together, the name “Tianyou” basically means “blessed by Heaven”

“If they’re so awesome, how come they’re in the Outer Sect like us?” asked Bai Xiaochun, his mouth twisted in a bit of a sneer. Although he didn’t know much about Shangguan Tianyou and Lu Tianlei, he had already encountered Zhou Xinqi. In fact, the jade pendant in his bag of holding had been a gift from her.

Xu Baocai coughed dryly. Although he inwardly looked down on Bai Xiaochun, he didn’t dare to express that feeling, and instead chuckled wryly and said, “Elder Brother Bai, if it weren’t for the strict sect rules, those three would already have left the Outer Sect for the Inner Sect. Even still, they’re extremely famous, and fully deserve to be known as the number one figures in the Outer Sect. Even the Inner Sects fear them. Once their cultivation bases reach the proper level, they’ll definitely become stars in the Inner Sect too! Although, for them, even the Inner Sect will just be a springboard to their eventual goal of becoming Successor

disciples!”

Bai Xiaochun still wasn't very convinced.

“Take Zhou Xinqi for example. Because of her spirit meridian of plants and vegetation, she'll definitely inherit the mantle of Peak Lord Li, and will become a master apothecary of the Spirit Stream Sect. And then there's Lu Tianlei. He grew up in a very poor family, and started out as skinny as a piece of firewood. But he had a rare spirit meridian of lightning, and the magical techniques he cultivates are of the path of the Dao of lightning. In fact, the Sect Leader personally said that he'll have an extraordinary future.”

“Really?” Bai Xiaochun asked, clearly surprised. He was no longer a newcomer to the cultivation world, and understood a lot about how things worked. When he heard about the spirit meridian of lightning, he couldn't help but feel a bit jealous. A spirit meridian like that would cause one's magical techniques to be explosively powerful, and would ensure that few bottlenecks came up within cultivation.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was finally reacting like people usually did when hearing about these things, he went on to talk about the third person: “Of course, there's also Shangguan Tianyou, who's even more amazing. He has a Sword Spirit body, and some people even say that he's the reincarnation of some almighty sword cultivator. For some reason, it's like the Heavens are guilty, and have blessed him with an entire life of good fortune. When he was three, he was walking down the road and happened to find an ancient sword; when he was seven, a baby Crimson Cloudbeast fell out of the sky and instantly accepted him as its master; when he

was thirteen, he acquired a golden light shield. That is why his name is Tianyou, and as soon as he joined the sect, the Prime Elders were completely shaken.”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were wide, and he looked somewhat perturbed. “The Heavens are guilty!?!? Three years old...? What luck! What kind of... wait, he’s the reincarnation of some almighty ancient cultivator?”

In that moment, he decided that he would definitely not do anything to provoke Shangguan Tianyou, who even the Heavens catered to.

Xu Baocai was extremely pleased to see Bai Xiaochun so shocked, so he sighed and then decided to explain a bit about Foundation Establishment. “Those three will definitely reach Foundation Establishment. Elder Brother Bai, we cultivators start out as servants and then join the Outer Sect. We liken our promotion to the fish which leapt over the dragon gate. However, the truth of the matter is that only by breaking through from the Qi Condensation stage to Foundation Establishment can you truly be that fish who leapt over the dragon gate. It is only then that your life actually changes, and you truly shed that which is mortal. That is the true path of Immortality, when your longevity is increased by a hundred years.”

Even as Xu Baocai sighed, Bai Xiaochun heard about an increase of one hundred years of longevity, and his eyes lit up with a light more intense than anything which had ever been seen before in his eyes. He even began to tremble, and his mind filled with rumbling sounds. He reached out and grabbed Xu Baocai by the arm.

“Did you just say that after you reach Foundation Establishment you get an extra hundred years of longevity?”

Xu Baocai stared at Bai Xiaochun’s bloodshot eyes in shock. Feeling a bit frightened, he nodded his head.

Bai Xiaochun inhaled sharply, and then began to pace back and forth within his courtyard, waving his arms around and gesticulating wildly. He almost looked like he had gone crazy, and was muttering to himself and laughing maniacally.

Xu Baocai was now really scared, and had no idea what was going on. A chill ran down his spine, and he said that he was going to leave. Bai Xiaochun didn’t even notice; it was almost as if he had been bedeviled.

Xu Baocai took a deep breath and sped away in fear.

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, Bai Xiaochun looked up, his hair disheveled as he took a long, deep breath. Then he threw his head back and laughed loudly.

“One hundred years! Foundation Establishment! I’m definitely going to reach Foundation Establishment!”

## Chapter 36: The Little Turtle Proclaims Superiority!

---

Xu Baocai had completely ignited Bai Xiaochun's desire to reach Foundation Establishment. In the following days, he went to the Scripture Pavilion on numerous occasions, and eventually, even went to the Divine Might Hall.

The Divine Might Hall was a place where much general information about the cultivation world was gathered for the purposes of study. After studying the detailed explanation about Foundation Establishment, Bai Xiaochun confirmed that what Xu Baocai had said was accurate, and it was like a spark was lit within him.

In his view, only by reaching Foundation Establishment could he truly take his first step upon the road of eternal life.

What got him even more excited was the information about how there were three ways to reach Foundation Establishment, each of which affected longevity in a different way. At long last, he had a much clearer understanding.

“Heaven, Earth, and Man. Three types of Foundation Establishment....

“Foundation Establishment via the Dao of Man requires a Foundation Establishment Pill. The probability of success is low, but if you succeed, you acquire a hundred years of longevity.

“Foundation Establishment via the Dao of Earth involves absorbing Earth energy and transforming it into shocking power. The probability of success is even lower, but the result is an addition of two hundred years of longevity!

“Last is the legendary... Foundation Establishment via the Dao of Heaven! That’s very rare, and can only come via random chance. However, if you can succeed with that type of Foundation Establishment, then you get an extra five hundred years of longevity!” After more detailed study, Bai Xiaochun confirmed that Foundation Establishment via the Dao of Heaven could not be specifically pursued. As for Foundation Establishment via the Dao of Earth, there were special requirements to be able to acquire Earth energy.

Therefore, the simplest thing for him to do was aim for Foundation Establishment via the Dao of Men, which required a Foundation Establishment Pill.

Bai Xiaochun put down the jade slip he was holding and took a deep breath, his eyes shining brightly. “I need to start planning for the future, and make sure I’m completely prepared. And I have to get one of those Foundation Establishment Pills....

“Foundation Establishment Pills are expensive, and just to be prepared for all possibilities, I should definitely have more than one on hand. In that case... the best thing to do would be to concoct some myself!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered as his dream of becoming a master apothecary and concocting a Live-Forever Never-Die pill became even stronger than ever.

“Apprentice apothecary, journeyman apothecary, master apothecary.... Right now I’m an apprentice apothecary. To become a journeyman apothecary, I have to concoct some medicinal pills and take the promotion test.... The minimum requirement for the test is that you master the fifth volume of plants and vegetation. But that alone is no guarantee. I also need to completely master all five volumes of spirit creatures.” Eyes gleaming with determination, he pulled out the jade slip that contained the third volume of plants and vegetation and went through it in detail one more time. After confirming that he had memorized everything, he immediately left his courtyard.

However, moments later, he came running back and quickly put on several layers of clothing, and also disguised himself a bit. Only then did he actually leave.

“Those fans of Zhou Xinqi are too frightening. Supposedly they’ve been telling people they’re going to cut me to pieces.... I really have no choice other than to keep a low profile.” He still felt a little bit uneasy.

After considering the difference between himself and Zhou Xinqi’s fans, he finally reached a decision. “Hmph. Just wait until I reach Foundation Establishment. Then I’ll make a big scene and tell everyone that I’m Lord Turtle. Then we’ll see who dares to try to cut me to pieces!”

As usual, the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion was completely packed. It wasn’t just Outer Sect disciples from Fragrant Cloud Peak in attendance, there were also disciples from Green Crest Peak and



Violet Cauldron Peak, who for various reasons were required to be proficient in plants and vegetation.

Currently, Bai Xiaochun was worming his way through the crowd, trying to make sure he didn't attract any attention. After reaching the log cabin dedicated to the third volume of plants and vegetation, he snuck in, took the test, then melted back into the crowd.

Although he had originally planned to just leave, after a moment passed, he couldn't hold back from popping his head up and looking around. It didn't take long before a clamor rose up as people realized that on the stone stele of the third volume of plants and vegetation, the turtle design had overtaken the magic bottle.

Feeling quite pleased, he plastered a shocked look on his face and shouted out in astonishment. However, it only took a moment for Zhou Xinqi's fiendish fans to appear, which caused Bai Xiaochun to ball his fists in frustration.

"It's their fault that I have to keep such a low profile," he thought angrily. He glared at them for a moment and then turned and hurried away.

In the following days, news about the little turtle once again spread like wildfire through Fragrant Cloud Peak's Outer Sect. Everyone was talking about the little turtle design that was so prominently displayed on the stone steles.

However, another month later, just as the rumors were

beginning to settle down, the disciples outside the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion suddenly noticed that the little turtle had appeared on the fourth stone stele, and it had once again passed the magic bottle to take 1st place.

The result was an instant uproar!

“The little turtle is going to completely surpass Elder Sister Zhou Xinqi soon! He has four 1st place spots!”

“He has four stone steles, and Elder Sister Zhou Xinqi has five. Just who is the little turtle...?”

Of course, it was Bai Xiaochun shouting these things out, and it made him feel quite good. However, when Zhou Xinqi’s fans started devolving into a frenzy, he cleared his throat, lowered his head, and went on his way.

A few days later, Zhou Xinqi showed up in the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion and studied the four stone steles, a very serious expression on her face. Then she entered the tenth stone stele. When she emerged, her name now occupied the 1st place spot.

By that point, all of the Outer Sect disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak were paying close attention to the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion. Zhou Xinqi had her six stone steles, and the little turtle had four....

Everyone was speculating as to whether or not the little turtle would eventually take a fifth stone stele, which would put him on

par with Zhou Xinqi.

In fact, some of the Outer Sect disciples were starting to place bets on whether or not the little turtle could actually take 1st place in five stone steles. It even reached the point that some of the Elders of Fragrant Cloud Peak were taking note.

Bai Xiaochun was going absolutely all out to try to take that next 1st place spot. After getting the relevant jade slip, he studied it day and night. Coupled with how much he hated Zhou Xinqi's fans, whenever he made his monthly visit to the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion and got a first place spot, he would make a point of whipping up the crowd in favor of the little turtle.

Gradually, quite a few disciples began to admire the little turtle, and much of that had to do with Bai Xiaochun himself. He never passed up an opportunity to promote the little turtle to whomever he could speak to about it. For example, by this point, Hou Xiaomei was thoroughly obsessed.

Eventually, a month later on a bright and sunny day, the magic bottle on the fifth stone stele flickered and then dropped down by one spot, whereupon the little turtle appeared above it.

As of that moment, the Outer Sect disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak were thrown into pandemonium. Entire crowds came to check out the scene, and soon, all conversations on the mountain revolved around the little turtle.

“The little turtle's skill with plants and vegetation is definitely at

an indescribable level. How else could he be so shocking?”

“So awesome! The little turtle and Elder Sister Zhou are about the same now....”

It wasn't that nobody in the crowd suspected that the little turtle might be Bai Xiaochun. In fact, some of Zhou Xinqi's fans didn't ignore any possibilities, and naturally were paying attention to him.

Feeling quite indignant, Bai Xiaochun decided that he needed to get rid of any doubts, so he made a big scene of reluctantly trying to take the test for the fourth stone stele. He remained inside for a bit, after which he stepped out and did his best to convince everyone that he had performed badly.

After doing this a few times, Zhou Xinqi's fans started to shift their attention to others. Of course, there was no way to prove anything about anybody one way or another.

However, they continued to spread hateful gossip, telling people that if they found out who the little turtle was, they weren't going to cut him into bits, they were going to cut him into teeny tiny bits!

When Bai Xiaochun heard about that, and thought about what he would look like in such a state, he began to tremble. Finally, he gritted his teeth, and his vicious determination once again bubbled up.

“Not happy, huh? Well I’ll make you even less happy when I take more 1st place spots!” Gritting his teeth, he decided that he was going to make that happen, and close the distance between himself and Zhou Xingqi.

A month later, the little turtle took 1st place on the sixth stone stele!

After another month, it took 1st place on the seventh!

Shouts of alarm and astonishment rang out around the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion at that point.

“Seven 1st place spots! Go, little turtle, go! Not even Elder Sister Zhou was able to get ten 1st place spots!”

“Hahaha, I like this little turtle. He’s definitely going to pull it off!”

Even as numerous disciples in the crowd were crying out such things, there were a dozen or so young men in the area, all of whom had very grim expressions on their faces. Some of them were even Inner Sect disciples, whose expressions were particularly icy. One of them was a young man with a pockmarked face, whose eyes glinted with particular ferocity.

“Ladies and gentlemen, fellow disciples,” he called out. “If anyone knows who the little turtle is, please tell me, and I’ll owe you a favor!” That pock-faced young man’s voice caused everyone

to tremble, and instantly silenced all of the voices calling out about the little turtle.

People in the crowd immediately recognized who this young man was, and quickly averted their gazes. Others were incensed, but were too afraid to speak up.

“That’s Elder Brother Qian from the Court Hall, Qian Dajin....”

“I heard that he’s been chasing both Elder Sister Zhou and also Du Lingfei....”

Bai Xiaochun stood there in the crowd, glaring at the pock-faced Qian Dajin with righteous indignation. Finally, he stalked back to his courtyard, feeling very irritated.

“You can’t even find me, and yet you insist on fighting a duel with me!?” Setting his jaw, he focused on studying the fifth volume of spirit creatures. As he learned more about how the various parts of spirit creatures could be used when concocting spirit medicines, his skill with plants and vegetation made further advancement.

In fact, because he was able to compare and contrast the two, and see how they worked together, his skill with plants and vegetation actually experienced significant growth.

The next month, the little turtle design replaced the magic bottle as the 1st place spot holder on the eighth stone stele!

After another month, he took 1st place in the ninth!

He now had nine 1st place spots!

The Outer Sect disciples around the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion were aboil. More and more people were loudly proclaiming that the little turtle was definitely going to take ten 1st place spots.

As for Zhou Xinqi's fans, there was nothing they could do to stop it at this point. All they could do was watch as the little turtle's popularity gradually exceeded Zhou Xinqi's.

When the final month came, Bai Xiaochun went to the 10,000 Medicines pavilion when it was at its busiest. He went in disguise, but his expression was one of determination as he worked his way unnoticed through the line leading up to the log cabin beneath the tenth stone stele.

Once he entered, he sat down cross-legged, reached out, and placed his hand onto the stone altar. Rumbling filled his mind as he once again entered that familiar void.

In front of him were 1,000,000 flickering fragments of medicinal plants and spirit creatures. Eyes gleaming with focus, his hands began to fly about and reorganize the pieces.

1,000. 5,000. 10,000....

30,000. 50,000. 80,000

This was the most difficult of all the tests he had taken so far. Soon, sweat was dripping down his face, and his eyes were bloodshot. He looked crazed, as if he had forgotten about everything else. He was fully immersed in the process of reconstructing plants and vegetation, and spirit creatures. His hands hurt, and his mind reeled, and yet he kept going.

Before long, the test was over, and Bai Xiaochun sat here, his hands trembling as he put the last medicinal plant together. With that, his vision went blurry, then cleared, and he was back in the log cabin.

Breathing heavily, eyes shining with satisfaction, he wiped the sweat from his brow and clenched his fists.



# Chapter 37: Heaviness-In-Lightness

---

Ten stone steles, ten 1st place spots!

The three peaks on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect were completely shaken.

Outside the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion, a buzz of conversation could be heard. People were speeding over from all directions to catch a glimpse of the little turtle in 1st place on all ten stones steles. Gasps rang out.

“Ten 1st place spots! The little turtle actually did it!”

“The last time anyone in the Spirit Stream Sect ever took ten 1st place spots in the stone steles was a thousand years ago! How could I ever have imagined that I would see something like this in my life!?”

Everyone was clamoring in shock, and although many people had predicted that this would happen, it was still a shocking event. That was especially true considering the previous three months, in which one stone stele after another fell into the hands of the little turtle. When people thought about that, they simply couldn't stay calm.

“Just who exactly is the little turtle...? In less than half a year, he started from the third stone stele and then swept through all his competition in the rest of them. This guy is totally famous!”

“His skill with plants and vegetation completely exceeds Zhou Xinqi’s. Maybe in the future, there will even be another master apothecary in addition to Zhou Xinqi!”

In the same moment that the little turtle secured 1st place on all ten stone steles, the steles began to vibrate, letting off intense rumbling noises that merged together, and then were joined by the sound of a clanging cauldron coming from further up the mountain.

It was as if someone were striking a medicine cauldron with an enormous log. The muffled booms spread out through all of Fragrant Cloud Peak, and then echoed out to fill the entire south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect. It was accompanied by a medicinal aroma that filled the area, and caused the mists that covered Fragrant Cloud Peak to grow even thicker.

At the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak was an Immortal’s cave where Elder Zhou was in the middle of feeding some of his cherished five-colored spirit birds. When he heard the sound of the cauldron, his eyes lit up with surprise.

“The Fragrant Cloud Cauldron?” He sent his divine sense out and instantly detected what was happening among the ten stone steles outside the 10,000 Medicines pavilion. His expression immediately flickered, and he stepped out into the air.

Next, Elder Sun appeared, along with other Foundation Establishment cultivators. All of them had heard the sound of the

cauldron, and were now proceeding in the direction of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion, excited expressions on their faces.

The last to appear was Li Qinghou, who had been in the middle of meditation. When he heard the sound of the cauldron, his face flickered, and he looked outside. Then, he transformed into a beam of colorful light that shot toward the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

As the sound of the cauldron rang out, the crowd grew even more excited. Both the Outer Sect and Inner Sect disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak were completely shaken, and many began to rush in the direction of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

“That’s... the sound of the precious treasure of Fragrant Cloud Peak, the Fragrant Cloud Cauldron!”

“Someone took ten 1st place spots at the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion! That hasn’t happened for a thousand years! This is unheard-of!”

Excitement even broke out on Green Crest Peak and Violet Cauldron Peak. Big Fatty Zhang was hanging his head as a beautiful, alluring woman berated him. That woman was none other than the old shrew that Big Fatty Zhang had complained to Bai Xiaochun about. As soon as she heard the sound of the cauldron, her expression flickered, and she looked off into the distance. Big Fatty Zhang’s face fell in shock as he did the same thing.

“The sound of the Fragrant Cloud Cauldron. Could it be that

some disciple on Fragrant Cloud Peak has actually gotten perfect results in all of the tests?”

Similar scenes played out on Green Crest Peak, causing the Elders and the Peak Lord there to look over in astonishment.

More and more people were filling the area around the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

Bai Xiaochun was there in the crowd, and when he heard the uproar, he looked up at the ten stone steles. Although he didn't join in with the shouting, his heart was filled with an indescribable feeling. He stood there, a smile growing on his face; not a complacent smile, or a lofty smile, a smile of pure happiness.

It had taken him more than a year to work this miracle. He had started from the first stone stele, then taken 1st place in all ten. However, having a bunch of 1st place spots didn't mean much to him in the end. The most important thing was that he had gained a complete mastery over plants and vegetation, as well as the spirit creatures, something that apprentice apothecaries needed to be proficient in.

He had crafted an unprecedentedly deep foundation. As he thought back to the long days and endless nights he had spent obsessively studying plants and vegetation, and then spirit creatures, Bai Xiaochun sighed emotionally.

In the entire Spirit Stream Sect, there weren't even any Inner Sect disciples who had such a strong foundation in their skill with

plants and vegetation. Currently, Bai Xiaochun was feeling very satisfied.

Soon, numerous beams of light could be seen flying through the air, all of them emanating powerful cultivation base fluctuations. Among them were Elder Zhou, Elder Sun... and of course Li Qinghou.

They looked over the ten stone steles, and the little turtle in the 1st place spot, and their eyes began to shine brightly. That was especially true of Li Qinghou. That little turtle design caused him to first start in shock, then begin to laugh loudly, a strange expression on his face. He looked out over the crowd, and caught sight of Bai Xiaochun, after which a glint of praise appeared in his eyes that no one could detect.

After a long moment passed, he flicked his sleeve and left, quite happy after having guessed that the little turtle belonged to none other than Bai Xiaochun.

Soon, the other members of the Senior generation left. However, more and more Inner Sect disciples were showing up to stare in shock at the little turtle. After all, they had all risen up from the Outer Sect, and knew very well that only Outer Sect disciples were allowed to challenge the stone steles. They also knew how difficult of a challenge that was.

“Any Outer Sect disciple who can do this is definitely a Chosen....”

“Hmph. We’re journeyman apothecaries, so all we care about is spirit medicines. Incredible skill with plants and vegetation is meaningless if you can’t concoct spirit medicine!”

Some of the Inner Sect disciples clearly admired the little turtle, and others disdained it. However, regardless of their feelings, a deep impression had been made, and in fact, most of them were actually a bit frightened.

None of them had any idea how skilled this person would be at medicine concocting, but with such a solid foundation, once that person became a journeyman apothecary, his path would certainly be much smoother.

The uproar continued until eventually Zhou Xinqi showed up. She stood there on her blue flying silk, examining the little turtle. Slowly, the crowd quieted down, and all eyes turned in her direction.

The sight of the little turtle in the 1st place spot on all of the stone steles caused an unyielding gleam to appear in her eyes. In the past, this was the sort of complicated expression that she caused to appear in the eyes of others, but now, the opposite had happened.

“Just who are you...?” she murmured through clenched teeth. Although she couldn’t bear to admit it, she had tried hard on numerous occasions to match the mysterious little turtle in terms of skill with plants and vegetation, but his ability was just too profound. As of this moment, she had no confidence whatsoever in being able to surpass him. By now, that little turtle was completely and utterly branded onto her heart.

“You might be stronger than me with plants and vegetation, but just wait until you become a journeyman apothecary. I refuse to believe that you’ll surpass me when it comes to medicine concocting!” She took a deep breath and calmed herself down. She had already taken the test and been promoted to journeyman apothecary, so after giving the stone steles one last look, she spun and vanished off into the distance.

After giving the ten stone steles one last look, Bai Xiaochun turned and left. “This is just the first stop along my path to becoming a grandmaster apothecary!”

The matter of the ten stone steles caused a commotion that lasted for months. People talked about it nonstop, especially when they went to the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion and actually saw the little turtle on the stone steles.

Meanwhile, Zhou Xinqi’s fans were combing the sect, employing all tactics possible to try to figure out who the little turtle was. That was especially true of the young man surnamed Qian, who was infuriated about the matter.

The entire south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect was affected. While people were constantly discussing the little turtle, Bai Xiaochun was in his courtyard, eyes bloodshot as he controlled a tree leaf that floated in front of him.

He was now studying the stage of Heaviness-in-Lightness. Actually, he had repeatedly attempted to do so throughout the past

half year, but it wasn't until now that he had been able to do anything with it.

Because of how things had ended at the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion, Zhou Xinqi's fans were constantly searching for him. A sensation of crisis slowly built up within him, so he decided to weather things out in his residence while he worked on Heaviness-in-Lightness.

“Lightness-in-Heaviness is about speed. Heaviness-in-Lightness... is about control methods!” A thoughtful expression appeared in Bai Xiaochun's eyes as he pondered everything he had come to understand recently.

“Or perhaps you could say that such control is actually an eruption of one's internal spiritual energy!” Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered. He was now in the sixth level of Qi Condensation, and his internal spiritual energy was like a huge river. When it came to Lightness-in-Heaviness, he could sustain it indefinitely, and unleash shocking speed.

He had long since come to understand that the so-called stage of Heaviness-in-Lightness was simply a way of utilizing one's internal spiritual energy. It was like how a flat leaf could be used to pull a small branch up into the air, but a rolled up leaf could hoist up a small rock. Likewise, if you cut a leaf into strips and then braided it into a rope, it would be able to lift even heavier objects.

Many materials were like that; in the end, the different weights that could be lifted depended simply on how one combined the various elements.



Heaviness-in-Lightness was just such a technique, and by mastering it, you could reach a new stage.

Bai Xiaochun thought about the matter for a bit longer, then waved his hand, causing another leaf to fly over, which he began to experiment with. Sometimes the leaf moved quickly, at other times it moved as slowly as if a mountain were crushing onto it. However, he wasn't getting the result he wanted.

After one try didn't work, he tried ten times. After ten tries didn't work, he tried a hundred times. After a hundred tries didn't work... he tried a thousand times.

He eventually lost track of how many times he had tried. Soon, his courtyard was filled with fragments of leaves which had been destroyed, and he even had to go out looking for new leaves. Eventually, nearly all of the spirit plants on Fragrant Cloud Peak were devoid of leaves, until, on one particular day, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered, and he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out. The leaf in front of him was floating there gently, but when it fell to the ground it sounded like a boulder.

A huge boom rang out, and the entire courtyard residence shook. It was as if that one leaf weighed hundreds of kilograms.

"It worked!" Bai Xiaochun's eyes were shot with blood, but his expression was one of excitement. He suddenly waved his hand, sending his little wooden sword flying out. It turned into a black streak that shot through the air with incredible speed. It was now

even more incredible than before, and emanated a shrill whistling sound as it pierced through the air.

Then, a boom rang out as a huge boulder was shattered to pieces.

Such incredible power was no longer equivalent to the sixth level of Qi Condensation. Even someone in the seventh level of Qi Condensation would be completely shocked by what had just happened.

## Chapter 38: Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning

---

Bai Xiaochun looked very excited as he leaped to his feet and shook out his arms and legs, then sent the wooden sword flying around the courtyard dramatically. Sometimes it would speed through the air rapidly, other times it would hang ponderously in the air, motionless.

The wooden sword experienced a complete transformation there in the courtyard. Soon, sword qi swirled around the entire area, almost as if a huge wind had kicked up. Bai Xiaochun was even more excited than before.

A moment later, he waved his right hand, and the little wooden sword flew back into his hand. The gaudy sword didn't look very remarkable, but the truth of the matter was that thanks to the threefold spirit enhancement, it was completely beyond what it had been before.

“If I can master both Heaviness-in-Lightness and Lightness-in-Heaviness, then by using them together, I can perform... the only divine ability within the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art!” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and his eyes shone with anticipation.

“Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning!” Bai Xiaochun put the wooden sword away, then closed his eyes for a long moment. Suddenly, he lifted his right hand and pointed up into the sky. Instantly, his previously invisible internal spiritual energy suddenly appeared in a dazzling flash, the thin strands of spiritual energy rapidly forming into the outline of a cauldron.

It was as if some mysterious power were guiding them, transforming them into that specific shape.

Pulses of incredible pressure began to radiate out from the cauldron, spirit pressure which was even more powerful than the pressure from the flying sword.

Bai Xiaochun's face rapidly drained of blood as the spirit pressure within him was depleted by nearly eighty percent. At that point, the cauldron was fully formed, and was emanating an intense spirit pressure. Bai Xiaochun gestured with his fingers, sending the cauldron smashing down toward the ground.

When that happened, the cauldron shattered, and vast quantities of spiritual energy scattered about.

A powerful boom echoed out, and the ground for 300 meters in all directions emitted cracking sounds as fissures spread out.

Thankfully, Fragrant Cloud Peak's protective spell formation almost instantly repaired the damage. Even still, quite a few Outer Sect disciples who were nearby heard the muffled boom, and were shocked.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. He had never imagined that the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning would be so impressive. A single attack from it seemed almost unbeatable.

“Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning definitely deserves to be the

only divine ability within the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art. No wonder it can only be unleashed after both Heaviness-in-Lightness and Lightness-in-Heaviness are completely understood.” Bai Xiaochun eyes shone with a brilliant light, but almost in the same instant, he frowned. Although this divine ability was strong, it took a lot of energy out of him.

Bai Xiaochun knew that the reason he had wasted only eighty percent of his spiritual power, and not more, was because it was so pure. Any other disciple who gained enlightenment of this divine ability before the eighth level of Qi Condensation would have had all of their internal spiritual energy drained. The only way to truly utilize the technique without incredible wastage was to wait until the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

“According to the description of the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning, it can be divided into high-grade, mid-grade, and low-grade levels. The cauldron I just produced was low-grade. If I can reach the mid-grade level, I’ll be able to form two cauldrons. By reaching high-grade, I can have three cauldrons, then form them together into one big cauldron!” After standing there thoughtfully for a moment, Bai Xiaochun sat down cross-legged and began to perform breathing exercises. It was not until the moon hung high in the sky that he finally opened his eyes, revealing a bright spirit glow in his eyes. As of now, his cultivation base had almost fully recovered.

“A divine ability like this can be used as a trump card. If Zhou Xinqi’s fans ever mess with me, I can use it to crush them.” Although Bai Xiaochun felt a little bit better, when he thought about the Inner Sect disciple named Qian, his brow furrowed.

“You have to be at least in the eighth level of Qi Condensation to get into the Inner Sect....” When he thought about that, Bai Xiaochun felt just as worried as before. He glanced down thoughtfully at his skin for a moment, and his eyes glittered. With that, he rose to his feet and took a few steps forward, picking up speed as he reached out with his thumb and index finger. A black light flashed as the tips of those two fingers then touched each other.

Cracking sounds rang out in the air, along with an explosive aura. Bai Xiaochun looked at his two fingers in surprise for a moment before recovering his composure.

“This is a killing move... that I can use to save my own life.” After some more thought, he came to the conclusion that the more powerful the killing move, the better it would be for him. Now, the main thing he was worried about was the Undying Live Forever Technique.

After acquiring his Undying Iron Skin, he had attempted to continue cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique, but found that as soon as he began, he started feeling hungry again.

Furthermore, the Spirit Tail Chickens on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect were no longer an option. He had only ordinary spirit food to rely on, which he was sure wouldn't be enough to stave off his hunger.

He had searched the rest of the mountain high and low for other spirit creatures to eat, but ever since the Chicken-Thieving Fiend's rise to fame, the three mountains on the south bank began to

closely guard all the areas where spirit creature were raised.

The anxiety on his face grew as he contemplated the problem. Even as he pondered how to solve the problem of the intense hunger, he suddenly thought back to the Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill.

“Yeah, that’s right....” he said, eyes beginning to shine brightly. Not only could that pill increase one’s cultivation base, it also replenished vital energy. After acquiring his Undying Iron Skin, he realized that cultivating it actually required vital energy, which was why he got so hungry.

“I’ve made huge strides in my skill with plants and vegetation, and although I haven’t been promoted yet, I can still concoct medicine on my own. Furthermore, although the cost of some spirit medicines is very high within the sect, the actual ingredients relatively cheap.” Bai Xiaochun was becoming more and more convinced that he had come up with a solution.

“Basically, I can just concoct my own medicine. That way, when the time comes to take the promotion test, I’ll be much more confident. Also, it will be much easier to concoct a Foundation Establishment Pill in the future.” Having made his decision, he set his jaw thoughtfully to ponder the matter further. The next morning at dawn, he fairly leapt to his feet.

“Concocting medicines requires medicine formulas, and I can get those even without being promoted to journeyman apothecary. All I have to do is head to the market at the bottom of the mountain and I’ll be able to purchase whatever random medicine formulas

are available.” Bai Xiaochun patted his bag of holding and thought about how he hadn’t really spent much money at all since arriving at Fragrant Cloud Peak. As an Outer Sect disciple, he was given a stipend of spirit stones every month, which meant he had quite a bit of savings built up.

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun didn’t really care much about material possessions, though. He immediately flew out of his courtyard onto the path that led down the mountain.

During the entire time he had been on Fragrant Cloud Peak, this was only the second time he had left the mountain to go to the markets. The first time was when he had purchased the medicinal plant he needed to trade for that medicinal pill. Almost as soon as he stepped foot off of Fragrant Cloud Peak, two people suddenly flew toward a nearby courtyard residence.

“Elder Brother Chen, are you home?!”

“Elder Brother Chen, Bai Xiaochun left the mountain!” These two people were both quite powerful, with extraordinary cultivation bases in the fourth level of Qi Condensation. They burst excitedly into the courtyard, where a burly man could be seen sitting cross-legged in meditation.

The burly man was incredibly muscular, as broad-shouldered as a bear and as tough-looking as a lion, and as soon as he heard the words spoken by the two men, a bright gleam flickered in his eyes.

“Bai Xiaochun? So, he finally left the mountain, huh?!” The



burly man laughed viciously, then suddenly shot to his feet. He looked as big as a mountain, and had profound energy, which came from a cultivation in the fifth level of Qi Condensation. As a result, he emanated a powerful spirit pressure.

This was none other than Chen Fei, who used to work in the Supervisor's Department.

These three had been friends since back in those days, and at that time had lacked for virtually nothing. Not only did they have other servants to wait on them back then, they had also been able to embezzle quite a sum of spirit stones. Of course, they had never expected to be literally pushed into the Outer Sect by Bai Xiaochun and his friends. The past two years had been hard on them, and their hatred for Bai Xiaochun had seeped deep into their bones.

However, they couldn't afford to provoke Big Fatty Zhang, much less Third Fatty Hei. On the other hand, even though Bai Xiaochun seemed strong, they were of the opinion that he was actually relatively weak. Thus they had long since planned their revenge. Unfortunately for them, during that entire time, Bai Xiaochun never left the sect. And in the end, even though Chen Fei had some connections, he didn't dare to violate sect rules.

Actually, his biggest connection in the sect was his older cousin, who was an Inner Sect disciple. However, his cousin didn't pay much attention to him, and had only helped him to a limited degree, even in his days as a servant.

Therefore, they had been forced to wait for two whole years for Bai Xiaochun to leave the sect. Now, the moment they had been

waiting for had arrived. Chen Fei was feeling completely confident thanks to his recent breakthrough into the fifth level of Qi Condensation. After asking around, he knew the level of Bai Xiaochun's cultivation, and had also heard about him taking 1st place in the recent competition, although the news was that he had won that victory by pure chance.

“Back then he scared us all by tricking us into thinking he had mastered Lightness-in-Heaviness. Hmph! I can't believe he forced us into joining the Outer Sect. At long last, I'm going to give vent to this anger of mine!” A fierce gleam appeared in Chen Fei's eyes. His plan wasn't to kill Bai Xiaochun, just crush his bones and sever his tendons, enough to keep him bedridden for at least a year.

Although the sect would surely investigate the matter afterwards, because there would be no eyewitnesses, because no death would be involved, and because Chen Fei had connections in the sect, the big matter would become a small one, and then that small matter would be easily resolved.

“You can't blame us if he just doesn't measure up!” Chen Fei flickered into motion, immediately heading down off the mountain, followed by his two friends. The three of them moved at top speed to a certain path they knew that Bai Xiaochun would pass on his way back from the market, and lay there in wait.

The market wasn't huge, so it didn't take Bai Xiaochun long to find two random tier-1 formulas. One of them could be used to replenish spiritual energy, the other was to enrich vital energy. When it came to formulas for enriching vital energy, the high-tier versions were very expensive. However, the low-tier versions,

despite being uncommon, were mostly used by mortals for health and exercise purposes.

Although most cultivators wouldn't find them useful, to Bai Xiaochun, they were like precious treasures. After using his turtle-wok to perform a threefold spirit enhancement on the resulting medicinal pills, they would have completely different results.

Bai Xiaochun didn't even spend very many of his spirit stones to get the necessary medicinal plants he would need to concoct the spirit medicines. Patting his bag of holding in happiness, he began to hum a little tune as he left the market. As he walked along the little path back to the sect, he fantasized about what it would be like to concoct the medicines, and he was very happy.

However, before he had walked very far down the path, his expression suddenly flickered, and he stopped in place. After reaching the sixth level of Qi Condensation, his senses had grown much keener, and he could instantly detect the breathing of three people hiding in the nearby bushes. Their hearts were also racing as they watched him coming up the path.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had stopped in place, Chen Fei and his two friends burst out to stand in front of him.

"Bai Xiaochun," he said viciously, "the day has come to end our grudge!" His friends wore equally ferocious grins on their faces as they spread out to flank Bai Xiaochun.

## Chapter 39: Crushing....

---

“Chen Fei?” Bai Xiaochun blurted, blinking. He quickly scanned Chen Fei and his two friends, and after determining the level of their cultivation bases, immediately relaxed.

“Bai Xiaochun, even if you drop to the ground and beg for mercy, it’s too late. It was your idea to force us into the Outer Sect, and you’re going to pay for that. I, Chen Fei, have been waiting for this day for a long, long time!” Laughing loudly, Chen Fei waved his right hand, unleashing the power of the fifth level of Qi Condensation. Numerous leaves were swept up into the air as a result, making for a very impressive scene.

“After joining the Outer Sect, I spent the entire time practicing cultivation, and now I’m in the fifth level of Qi Condensation. Let me tell you, Bai Xiaochun. Today you will truly understand what it means to be bullied. Your bones are going to be broken and your tendons severed!”

Laughing with complacent arrogance, Chen Fei performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing a green flying sword to appear. It was only about 15 centimeters long, but radiated a cold, ancient air.

As for Chen Fei’s two friends who had flanked Bai Xiaochun, they smiled viciously as they unleashed their cultivation bases and produced their own flying swords.

Considering they had him surrounded, and outnumbered him

three to one, they were completely confident that they could crush Bai Xiaochun. That was especially true after their own analysis led them to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun had never fully mastered Lightness-in-Heaviness like they originally thought he had.

“You would have been safe if you had never left the mountain. But here you are, outside the sect. And now you will understand the great price to be paid for the error of your ways!” Chen Fei felt a little better after having vented in this way, although anger still burned within him.

“Aren’t the three of you afraid of violating sect rules by ambushing me here?” Bai Xiaochun asked, genuinely curious.

“Sect rules? Hahaha! We’re outside the sect right now. Plus, you don’t measure up to us at all in skill. No one’s going to blame us for breaking a few bones and severing some tendons. At the worst, we’ll have to make some apologies, and then the whole matter will be over with.” Chen Fei laughed proudly, imagining the image of Bai Xiaochun smashing into the ground. He was even preparing some good taunts to use after beating him down.

However, when he noticed how calm Bai Xiaochun was acting, he suddenly realized that something wasn’t right. Despite being surrounded on three sides, Bai Xiaochun’s expression hadn’t changed at all, and in fact, he seemed to find the situation somewhat odd.

Looking like a master cultivator, Bai Xiaochun proudly said, “Oh, so that’s how it is. Well in that case I feel a lot better.”

Chen Fei's pupils constricted, and he felt even more ill at ease. However, now was not the time for pondering the situation.

"Attack!" he barked, performing an incantation gesture to send his flying sword shooting toward Bai Xiaochun. At the same time, his two friends also performed incantation gestures and sent their flying swords into action.

Three flying swords were bearing down on Bai Xiaochun, who suddenly smiled. He didn't even produce a magical item; he simply stepped backward. To the eyes of Chen Fei and his friends, Bai Xiaochun just seemed to vanish into thin air.

When he reappeared, he was right next to one of the burly men in the fourth level of Qi Condensation. The man's eyes went wide, but before he could do anything, Bai Xiaochun clenched his right hand into a fist and punched out.

The fist moved with incredible speed, landing on the man's neck with a boom. The man's entire body was shaken, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood as he bent over backward. It was as if some massive object had slammed into him; he immediately flipped head over heels, slamming into a nearby tree.

The tree shuddered, and the man coughed up some more blood, then collapsed, unconscious.

This sudden development left the man's companion staring at Bai Xiaochun in complete shock. His mind felt as if it were being

struck by countless bolts of lighting. Even in his wildest dreams, he would never have imagined that Bai Xiaochun... could possibly move so fast, or unleash such astonishing power.

Chen Fei's face fell, and he gasped. Without even thinking about it, he backed up, looking at Bai Xiaochun in disbelief.

“You....”

“Too weak,” Bai Xiaochun said, looking like a profound master, alone in the world, unable to find a worthy opponent. Sighing, he took a step forward, appearing directly in front of the other fourth level Qi Condensation cultivator.

The burly man let out a maddened shout, causing cultivation base power to surge wildly, sending the flying sword slashing toward Bai Xiaochun at top speed. However, because of the Undying Live Forever Technique, and his Undying Iron Skin, Bai Xiaochun's fleshly body had reached a shocking level. He easily sidestepped the sword, then once again punched out with his right fist.

A boom rang out, and the man let out a miserable shriek. Blood sprayed everywhere as he was sent spinning backward. There was no tree for him to run into, so he landed about thirty meters away, his internal organs vibrating painfully. He couldn't even get back to his feet; he just lay there, seemingly struggling to hold on to life.

“Too weak,” Bai Xiaochun said, shaking his head. Then he looked back at the trembling Chen Fei.

“Y-you... you....” Chen Fei’s mind was spinning, and he suddenly felt like a complete fool. He had absolutely no confidence in being able to win now; Bai Xiaochun had suddenly transformed into something like a wild beast.

Two fist attacks had easily knocked out his two friends; that in itself required an incomprehensible amount of power. Subconsciously swallowing, Chen Fei backed away; he had no desire to keep fighting, and the only thing he could think about now was to flee.

Before he could get very far, though, Bai Xiaochun flew forward at top speed, hand clenched into a fist which sped toward Chen Fei. Before it could land, a flashing light appeared in front of Chen Fei, and a little shield materialized, which met Bai Xiaochun’s fist.

The resulting boom caused Bai Xiaochun to sigh. He shivered slightly, but at the same time, the shield trembled, and it was sent spinning off to the side, its spiritual energy fading rapidly.

Chen Fei was now scared out of his mind. He had spent quite a few merit points on that shield, and it should have been able to hold out for a while even against the sixth level of Qi Condensation. And yet, Bai Xiaochun had severed his connection with it in a single blow.

“Bai Xiaochun, y-you... you push things too far!!” he shrieked.

“Hmph! Let me tell you, today you will truly understand what it



means to be bullied. Your bones are going to be broken and your tendons severed!” Bai Xiaochun was happier than ever to see the terror in Chen Fei’s eyes. He would never give up an amazing chance like this. Furthermore, he didn’t just repeat Chen Fei’s words, he also unleashed his cultivation base, allowing the power of the sixth level of Qi Condensation to erupt out. A huge wind swept up, sending his hair flying about, and his energy soaring.

“Sixth level of Qi Condensation....” Chen Fei gasped, his eyes bulging and his scalp tingling in fear. He staggered backward as Bai Xiaochun closed in with another punch. This time, there was nothing he could do to block it, and the fist slammed into him.

Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he flew backward, his entire body vibrating. A miserable shriek rang out. It didn’t matter that he was as broad-shouldered as a bear and as tough-looking as a lion, or that he was in the fifth level of Qi Condensation. He was now going all-out to escape, heart filled with intense bitterness, rueing his decision to try to ambush Bai Xiaochun... in a place so far away from the sect.

However, Bai Xiaochun was chasing after him like a wild beast, causing Chen Fei to shriek, “Bai Xiaochun, aren’t you afraid of violating sect rules!?!?”

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, then repeated Chen Fei’s own words. “Sect rules? Hahaha! We’re outside of the sect right now. Plus, you don’t measure up to me at all in skill. No one’s going to blame me for breaking a few bones and severing a few tendons. At the worst, I’ll have to make some apologies, and then the whole matter will be over with.” Then he kicked out with his foot.

That kick sent Chen Fei flying up into the air, where he once again coughed up a mouthful of blood. A look of despair appeared on his face, and he screamed. However, before he could even land on the ground, Bai Xiaochun began to batter him with more punches and kicks.

Chen Fei was terrified, and couldn't stop screaming. Soon, he was completely swollen from head to toe, and his screams were weakening.

His bones were broken, his tendons severed, and his face ashen. He soon lay there, numb and staring at Bai Xiaochun in complete horror.

Although Bai Xiaochun was pure, fair and somewhat skinny, what Chen Fei saw was a vicious beast disguised in human skin. That was even more so the case when Chen Fei realized that Bai Xiaochun hadn't even used any magical items. He had only relied on the terrifying strength of his own body to crush him.

Off in the distance, the two burly men in the fourth level of Qi Condensation regained consciousness, and when they saw what was happening, their scalps went numb and their hearts began to pound. They immediately pretended to go unconscious again, not daring to move lest they attract the attention of Bai Xiaochun.

Seeing that Chen Fei was gasping for breath, Bai Xiaochun finally lost interest. He settled his spiritual energy, then emptied their bags of holding and also took the little shield. Humming a little

tune, he continued on his way down the path.

As he watched Bai Xiaochun leaving, Chen Fei wanted to cry, but no tears would come. “Who the hell told me that Bai Xiaochun won the Fragrant Cloud Peak competition by pure chance!?!?”

If he had known all along that Bai Xiaochun was this terrifying, not even the threat of being beaten to death could have convinced him to stir up trouble.

As for the other two burly men, they were scowling miserably, hearts filled with terror as Bai Xiaochun made his way off.

“Elder Brother Chen, what do we do now...? Let’s just leave him alone, let bygones be bygones. I heard that’s what Xu Baocai did.” The two men anxiously awaited Chen Fei’s response.

Chen Fei’s heart was filled with bitterness. After a moment of thought, he gritted his teeth.

“I want revenge, but can’t get it myself. What should I do... I need to think....”

## Chapter 40: Pursuing The Pinnacle

---

Bai Xiaochun returned to the sect humming a little tune and feeling secretly delighted. After reaching his courtyard, he sighed.

“I practice Immortal cultivation to live forever. People like that who are always fighting and killing are complete lunatics.”

He sat down in his courtyard, and began to organize the various items he had taken from Chen Fei and his friends. They were by no means rich, which meant that Bai Xiaochun didn't actually make off with very much, although he didn't really care either way. When he was finished, he took out the medicinal plants he had just purchased and examined them carefully for a while.

Although he had a profound foundation in plants and vegetation, he actually didn't have much experience dealing with the plants themselves. Now that he was able to examine these plants in person, his observations melded with the information that already existed in his mind. He even scratched the surfaces of some of the plants off to examine their internal structure.

After doing some tests, a thoughtful expression appeared on Bai Xiaochun's face, and he pulled out the two random formulas he had acquired. After glancing at the formula for replenishing spiritual energy, he focused on the other formula, designed for mortals who wished to strengthen their physical bodies.

“Longevity Incense....” he murmured. This particular medicine formula didn't require the use of very many medicinal plants, only

seven. Furthermore, there wasn't anything very special about the way they interacted. However, by using the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression, it was possible to draw up the power of those seven medicinal plants, crush them into a powder, and then turn that into incense.

Two of the plants were even toxic. If a cultivator consumed them, it would merely lead to two weeks of diarrhea. To mortals, however, they would be fatal.

“There are many types of spirit plants in Heaven and Earth. Some can be directly ingested, whereas others need to be concocted into pills to bring out their optimum effects. There are many which, because of their toxicity, can only be used to concoct incense.” Muttering to himself, Bai Xiaochun took out the medicinal plants needed for the Longevity Incense, whereupon he began to study them in minute detail.

“I'm still not totally confident in this,” he thought. “The most important thing to think about in concocting medicine is the success rate. Even the simplest tier-1 spirit medicines still have a high rate of potential failure.

“I have ten sets of each medicinal plant. I can't waste them.” Bai Xiaochun was a cautious person, and preferred to be confident before doing anything. That was exactly how he had been back when he had absorbed himself in memorizing all the different types of plants and vegetation, and the current situation was the same. Instead of immediately trying to concoct the medicine, he preferred to pore over the medicine formula first.

Seven days passed. After fully absorbing the information from the medicine formula, he then closed his eyes and began to analyze the matter further. It was evening when he finally opened his eyes. Then, after a bit more thought, he produced the formula for the spiritual energy replenishing medicine and began to review it.

Two more weeks passed. Bai Xiaochun's eyes were bloodshot, but by now, he felt that he completely understood all of the various medicinal plants that were part of these medicine formulas. After more thought, he rose to his feet and walked out of the courtyard.

Medicine concocting required a pill furnace, but those were quite expensive, more expensive than Bai Xiaochun could afford. Thankfully, in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, there were pill furnaces available for use by disciples in their medicine concocting, at the price of a few merit points.

The Medicine Concocting Pavilion was on the east side of Fragrant Cloud Peak, not too far from where Bai Xiaochun lived. It wasn't like the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion, which was always teeming with crowds of people. The Medicine Concocting Pavilion was a relatively quiet and peaceful place. After all, even on Fragrant Cloud Peak, people who qualified to concoct medicine were relatively few in number. Of that small number, quite a few already had their own personal pill furnaces, and didn't need to come here to rent one.

Bai Xiaochun paid for the right to use the Medicine Concocting Pavilion facilities for an entire month. He was given a personal workshop, complete with a protective spell formation that prevented any interference from outside while he worked.

Clutching the wooden key he had been given, Bai Xiaochun quickly found workshop #13 and walked inside. It wasn't very large, and was completely empty except for the pill furnace and the flame which burned beneath it.

After sitting down cross-legged, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, then examined the pill furnace closely. When he tried to manipulate the flame with some spiritual energy, he found that he could cause the flame to grow much hotter, filling the entire room with intense heat. At the same time, the pill furnace itself began to glow bright red.

Drawing upon his foundation in the Violet Qi Control Art, he performed some tests, and quickly got used to the intense heat. It didn't take long before he became familiar with how to control the level of the flame. Finally, he slapped his bag of holding to produce the various types of plants and vegetation.

“The Longevity Incense is too important to put first on the list to concoct. First I'll get familiar with the general concoction process, then I'll try. I'll start out with the Spirit Replenishing Pill. That's a tier-1 pill, useful for the fifth level of Qi Condensation and lower.” Bai Xiaochun was now completely determined. Expression very serious, he mentally reviewed the medicine formula for the Spirit Replenishing Pill, then began to concoct.

He produced the first medicinal plant, then waved his hand, causing the leaves to fall off. Eyes gleaming with concentration, he sent his internal spiritual energy out, forming a powerful yet gentle force that crushed the leaves together into nine beads of sap,

which he then dropped into the pill furnace.

A plopping sound could be heard, and a green mist instantly rose up within the pill furnace. Bai Xiaochun's eyes gleamed brightly, and as soon as the mist actually appeared, his hands flew through the air as he extracted the stems and veins of the medicinal plant, which he then tossed into the furnace as well. Occasionally, he adjusted the flame, ensuring that more and more mist built up inside the furnace.

None of that mist escaped outside, though. It congealed together, swirling as Bai Xiaochun pulled out the second medicinal plant. After catalyzing it briefly, the medicinal plant bloomed with flowers, the petals of which he plucked and put into the pill furnace.

Time passed. Bai Xiaochun was completely focused on what he was doing as he pulled out one medicinal plant after another. Soon he was on the eighth plant, and his eyes were shining brightly as he stared at the pill furnace. As he continuously adjusted the temperature of the flame, sweat dripped down his face.

Two hours later, a muffled rumbling could be heard from inside the pill furnace. Black smoke poured out, to be absorbed by the room's spell formation. Bai Xiaochun was choking and coughing, and a frown could be seen on his face as he stared at the charred slag inside of the pill furnace.

"Failure...." he murmured. Sitting down and placing his chin on his hand, he began to think. After reviewing everything he had done, he didn't begin another batch immediately. After all, he was



a cautious person, and whether it came to memorizing plants and vegetation or concocting medicine, he always wanted to do it in the most prudent way possible.

He contemplated the matter for three full days. During that time, he reviewed what he remembered regarding his first attempt at least a thousand times. That helped him to identify at least fifty problematic areas. Finally, he took a deep breath, rested for a moment, and then once again heated up the furnace.

The actual time it took to produce the pill wasn't very long. Four hours later, the pill furnace emitted rumbling sounds once again, and when the smoke cleared, the spoiled remnants of the pill once again became visible.

At this point, his stubborn determination once again rose up. Removing the slag from the pill furnace, he examined it closely, then compared it to the information he had gleaned so far about medicine concocting. He then spent ten more days further examining the medicine formula, as well as the plants and vegetation involved. Finally, eyes bloodshot, he began to try a third time.

The third batch seemed much more stable, but just in the moment when the pills were about to solidify, everything fell apart, accompanied by muffled booms. Bai Xiaochun leapt forward and stared at the slag again. After more thought, he sat down cross-legged and closed his eyes to ponder the matter further.

This time, he spent nearly half a month. His time in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion was almost up. Finally, his eyes opened, and

he gritted his teeth as he began a fourth batch.

Eventually, his time was up, and the most recent batch was a failure.

If any journeyman apothecary could observe what was happening, he would find it hard to believe. Almost any other person would have attempted at least dozens of batches of medicine within a month's time, and would have succeeded in at least some of them.

Even if they only came up with one pill in the end, it would still count as a success.

After all, most people viewed medicine concocting as something extremely difficult. If that weren't the case, then there would be more than a mere two master apothecaries in all of the Eastwood Continent.

Even journeyman apothecaries were not very common, and most of them didn't have any hope of ever becoming master apothecaries.

Of course, the real reason for that was... most people didn't have access to the resources which were needed to truly develop as a journeyman apothecary.

In the end, though, if anyone worked long enough at it, their chances of eventually becoming a master apothecary would be

much greater. Therefore, most people believed that the best way to increase one's success rate in medicine concocting was simply to practice a lot!

And that was why most people simply pursued practice.

After you got familiar enough with the process, your confidence in success would increase. Of course, simultaneously, journeyman apothecaries came to view failure as an ordinary thing. After a failure, one could just begin again, and thus slowly improve. That was especially true of the more ordinary medicinal pills. Ingredients for pills like that were not very expensive, and could be used as fuel for that hard work and practice.

However, Bai Xiaochun walked a different path than others. He went much slower, and after every failure, he would spend more time analyzing why he had failed than he had in the actual concocting process.

This had a lot to do with his caution. It would even be appropriate to call him scrupulous. Only a bit of that scrupulousness had come out during his time studying plants and vegetation. Now that he was making his first foray into medicine concocting, his scrupulous nature increased dramatically, becoming the most outstanding aspect.

Because of that scrupulousness, he was able to identify even more problem areas than the average person would. In fact, the number of problems that other people might identify couldn't even compare. He thought and pondered the matter in ways that others wouldn't even consider, and thus identified various fishy areas.

Because of his caution, even the slightest problem was something he would wish to control before he continued with any concocting. It was because of these reasons that he spent so much time thinking.

The month had passed; Bai Xiaochun's hair was disheveled and his face was streaked with ash. Exhausted, he left the Medicine Concocting Pavilion and returned to his courtyard, where he sat there thinking and reviewing.

“There are still nine problem areas. Once I solve those problems, I should be able to continue with the medicine concocting.” Gritting his teeth, he sat there in his courtyard, eyes closed, analyzing the matter, occasionally taking a medicinal plant out to observe and study.

Half a month passed before he suddenly rushed out, spent the merit points, and entered the Medicine Concocting Pavilion again.

The fifth batch... was a failure!

After analyzing the matter for seven more days, he found more problems, solved them, and then tried again.

The sixth batch... was a failure!

His eyes were bright red. He spent twenty days contemplating the matter before trying a seventh batch.

Two hours into the process, no rumbling sounds could be heard. Instead, a medicinal aroma spread out, and Bai Xiaochun's face lit up. There inside the pill furnace were two green medicinal pills. The seventh batch was a success!

He tried again, and the eighth batch... succeeded, producing three pills!

The ninth batch... succeed, producing five pills!

The tenth batch... also succeeded, However, in the end, only one pill appeared. It was not green, but rather, black. Furthermore, it emanated no medicinal aroma, but rather, different odd scent.

Even as Bai Xiaochun pondered the matter curiously, the entire Medicine Concocting Pavilion was thrown into an uproar.

# Chapter 41: The Effectiveness Of Spirit Enhancement

---

There were no rats or mice on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Such things could not exist in a cultivation location such as this, not unless they were actually spirit creatures. However, ants were a common thing on the mountain.

Ants were an ordinary part of nature, and usually lived in the cracks and crevices of the boulders which could be all over the mountain. They didn't cause problems for the cultivators, and were essentially just an ordinary part of mountain life. As such, few people paid them much attention.

Today, however, the disciples on duty around the Medicine Synthesizing Pavilion were shocked to find that innumerable ants were filing across the ground toward the pavilion itself.

The disciples on duty gasped; there were so many ants it was impossible to determine how many they were. The sight itself was enough to make their scalps go numb. "What's... what's going on!?"

At the same time, many of the disciples in the various pill-concocting workshops cried out in alarm, and the sound of exploding pill furnaces could be heard. Although the pill-concocting workshops were protected by spell formations, they were also built into the mountainside, which meant that the ants could easily get into them through the various tiny crevices that riddled the mountain.

All of them were heading toward one particular workshop.

That was of course the workshop occupied by Bai Xiaochun, who wore an expression of curiosity as he looked at a black medicinal pill. It was at about this time that he noticed the clamor outside, and suddenly realized that the workshop he was in happened to be filled with ants.

The ants almost seemed to have gone insane, and all of them were heading directly toward him.

“An ant apocalypse has struck Fragrant Cloud Peak!” Bai Xiaochun shrieked, leaping to his feet. Unexpectedly, even as Bai Xiaochun leaped to his feet, so did the ants, heading directly toward the black medicinal pill he held.

Bai Xiaochun’s scalp was completely numb, and the first thing he could think of to do was throw the medicinal pill away. Almost as soon as it left his hand, the ants changed directions, pouncing onto it.

The pill was instantly engulfed, transforming into a ball of ants, the sight of which caused the blood to drain from Bai Xiaochun’s face.

A moment later, the ant ball suddenly collapsed, and the ants scurried back into the cracks and crevices. No trace remained of the medicinal pill.

In fact, not an ant remained in the entire Medicine Synthesizing Pavilion. The ants had come quickly, and vanished just as quickly. Of course, many of the disciples who had lost the spirit medicines they were working on felt a bit depressed at what had happened, but there was nothing they could do about it. Furthermore, the disciples on duty, having determined that no major losses had occurred, decided not to report the strange incident.

Bai Xiaochun knew exactly why the ants had gone crazy, but as for everyone else, the only thing they saw was a mass of ants passing through.

Bai Xiaochun's heart was still thumping in fear. There hadn't seemed to be anything unusual with the pill he had just concocted. However, he had been very focused on doing a perfect job, a job even better than the previous attempt. Now that he thought about it, he realized that he had actually made some adjustments to the ratios in the last Spirit Replenishing Pill batch.

"Could it be that the final Spirit Replenishing Pill was something extremely beneficial to ants?" Bai Xiaochun shook his head as he thought about how incredible he was. Not only could he concoct shocking medicinal pills, he could concoct pills drove ants crazy.

Upon leaving the workshop, he heard the depressed mutterings of the other disciples, and felt a bit guilty. Ducking his head down, he quickly hurried away.

A few days passed, during which Bai Xiaochun confirmed that the



incident in the Medicine Synthesizing Pavilion didn't cause any waves in the sect. Finally, he went back, paid his merit points, then selected a different workshop within which to concoct medicine.

This time, he started working on the Longevity Incense.

Concocting incense and concocting pills were two different things, and required the use of different techniques. Pills were consumed, whereas incense was inhaled. Of course, the final form was different too, one being a pill, the other being a stick of incense.

Considering what happened last time, Bai Xiaochun was very careful in the way he went about working on the Longevity Incense. Two months passed, and after using ten batches of ingredients, he ended up with seven portions.

He left feeling quite satisfied, seven portions of Longevity Incense in hand. Back in his log cabin, he performed a threefold spirit enhancement, after which the Longevity Incense changed to a deep violet color. Although the threefold spirit designs were somewhat faint, they were still visible. Furthermore, the feeling he got when looking at the incense was completely different than before.

Bai Xiaochun looked thoughtfully at the Longevity Incense, and realized that he himself was also very different than he had been. Before, he didn't understand much at all about spirit medicine, but after concocting some on his own, he was much more knowledgeable. For example, he knew that any type of spirit medicine would have impurities, impurities that shouldn't be

absorbed into the body, and yet were difficult to separate out. Such impurities could build up inside the body and eventually become so-called medicinal toxins.

That was why many experienced members of the Inner Sect were hesitant to recommend that less experienced disciples consume medicinal pills. Theoretically speaking, much of the medicinal toxins could be expelled out of the body. However, if someone consumed too many medicinal pills and accumulated too much medicinal toxin, it could influence their future cultivation.

Therefore, depending on how many impurities existed within a given spirit medicine, it would be classified as one of six different levels.

“Low, mid, high, superior, premium, supreme....” he murmured, looking down at the Longevity Incense. If the medicine was more than ninety percent impure, it would be considered a toxic medicine, and wouldn’t be classified in the hierarchy. Furthermore, such medicines would never be consumed unless absolutely necessary.

If the medicine was around eighty percent impure, it would be considered low-grade, which was the most common type of spirit medicine. Sixty percent impurity was considered mid-grade, and such medicines were not common. In fact, only true master apothecaries were known to produce such medicines.

Medicines which were only forty percent impure were high-grade, and were rare. As for medicines that were twenty percent impure, they were considered superior-grade, and if they were

only ten percent impure, they were premium-grade. Those were medicines that usually only appeared in large auctions.

Then there were the spirit medicines that had no impurities whatsoever, the legendary supreme-grade medicines.

Before, he hadn't really understood what he was doing when he performed spirit enhancements on the spirit medicines. But after closely examining the Longevity Incense, he realized that it didn't make it more powerful, the way it did with magical items. Instead... it actually improved the quality of the spirit medicine!

The Longevity Incense he held was now only forty percent impure, meaning that it was a superior-grade medicine!

As soon as he realized this, Bai Xiaochun got very excited. Then he considered the matter a bit more, and decided to make a trip to Violet Cauldron Peak. His purpose was not to visit Big Fatty Zhang, but rather, to visit the only Spirit Enhancement Hall that existed on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect.

There, Outer Sect disciples could spend merit points to get help from the Elders in the Spirit Enhancement Hall to perform spirit enhancements. Although there was still a chance of failure, many disciples frequented the place.

After looking around the Spirit Enhancement Hall, and also making some discreet inquiries, Bai Xiaochun was able to confirm that performing spirit enhancements on spirit medicine did indeed reduce the impurities and make them more effective.

After returning to Fragrant Cloud Peak, Bai Xiaochun looked excitedly at the incense he had made, then finally lit one stick and took a deep breath. Almost immediately, he felt as full as if he had eaten a big meal. Furthermore, as the aura of the incense spread out within him, he felt warm and comfortable. It was as if the flame of his life force had been fueled, and was now burning a bit hotter.

Continuing to inhale the incense, he went on to cultivate the Undying Live Forever Technique. As soon as the feeling of hunger hit him, he took a deep breath, and the feeling quickly faded.

The seven sticks of Longevity Incense enabled Bai Xiaochun to cultivate the Undying Live Forever Technique for half a month. During that time, he could sense his Undying Iron Skin growing tougher and stronger.

Feeling in very high spirits, he organized his bag of holding, then went down to the market and sold some of the things he had acquired from Chen Fei and his friends. Using the profits, he purchased ten more sets of ingredients for Longevity Incense, and then once again began to concoct medicine.

Thanks to his constant caution and attention to detail, his success rate in concocting the Longevity Incense increased, rising from seventy percent to eighty, and eventually reaching one hundred percent.

However, he still wasn't satisfied. Although his success rate had

reached one hundred percent, the quality of the resulting spirit medicine was merely low-grade.

His skill was not something that could be changed in a short period of time, leaving him with only option: use spirit enhancement to remove the impurities. When he used the Longevity Incense in cultivation, he would breathe in deeply and feel the true happiness that could be attained in Heaven and Earth.

His Undying Live Forever Technique improved with each day, as did his cultivation base, which was now nearing the great circle of the sixth level of Qi Condensation.

His greatest progress was with this Undying Live Forever Technique. With only a bit more work, he would be able to achieve a major success with his Undying Iron Skin. Bai Xiaochun's body was far tougher and more durable than before, and when he used the Throat Crushing Grap, his fingers were an even deeper black color than before.

By that time, though, the Longevity Incense was beginning to slowly lose its effectiveness. In the end, it did virtually nothing, causing Bai Xiaochun to sigh. He was aware that if you consumed enough of any given spirit medicine, the body would eventually adapt to it, and it would lose effectiveness.

If he wanted to continue his cultivation, he would need a spirit medicine that was even better than the Longevity Incense. Unfortunately, the formulas for spirit medicines like that were strictly controlled. It was impossible to purchase them at the market; they could only be acquired with merit points after being

promoted to journeyman apothecary.

The only other option would be to go to a larger market, but places like that were some distance away from the sect. After considering the matter, Bai Xiaochun lit up with determination.

“I’m going to get promoted to journeyman apothecary!”

Considering his experience concocting medicines, as well as his skill with plants and vegetation, it shouldn’t be too much of a problem to qualify for promotion. However, just to be safe, he spent the following several days buying a few more random medicine formulas. After concocting each one a few times, then analyzing his failures, he felt much more confident, and went to sign up for the journeyman apothecary promotion test.

Of course, the promotion test wasn’t something held for a single individual. Only when enough people had signed up would the test be held. After waiting for another month, even as he was pondering some matters regarding spirit medicines, his identity medallion inside of his bag of holding began to vibrate. When he pulled it out, an ancient voice filled his mind.

“Tomorrow at dawn, come to the Journeyman Apothecary Hall, where the test for journeyman apothecary promotion will be held.”

## Chapter 42: Promotion Test

---

The Journeyman Apothecary Hall was located on the south face of Fragrant Cloud Peak. It was surrounded by lush trees and vegetation, and could only be accessed by a narrow limestone path which snaked off of one of the main thoroughfares that ran up and down the mountain. Unless there was a promotion test underway, few people would walk along that path. However, when the time came for the test, it would be packed.

In addition to the disciples who had come to take the test, there were also friends who had come to support the test-takers, or even people who weren't confident enough to take the test without first observing it being held a few times.

From a distance, the Journeyman Apothecary Hall actually looked like a person sitting cross-legged in meditation. In front of that person was a pill furnace, beneath which was a passageway that led into a main square.

Set up in that main square were twenty pill furnaces, all of which looked completely identical. Laid out next to each of the pill furnaces was a bag containing various types of plants and vegetation that could be used in medicine concocting.

It was dawn, and Bai Xiaochun, worried about getting lost, had come very early. However, when he arrived, he found that there were people who had arrived even earlier than him. There were dozens of people standing around in groups of two or three, chatting quietly, and even some people who stood apart from the others alone, waiting cross-legged in meditation.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the type of person to sit around like an idiot meditating. After glancing around, he caught sight of Xu Baocai and walked over. When Xu Baocai saw him approaching, he clasped hands in greeting, and the two of them began to chat. It quickly became apparent that virtually nothing went on in the sect without Xu Baocai finding out about it.

"Elder Brother Bai," he said, "did you hear that about half a year ago, Chen Fei and his friends were mysteriously beaten into bloody pulps? They've been bed-ridden ever since, and for some reason, won't talk at all about what happened." Even as he spoke, he looked at Bai Xiaochun carefully to see his reaction.

Bai Xiaochun yawned dramatically, and was just about to start boasting about what had happened when all of a sudden, a buzz of conversation rose up in the crowd. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun felt as if someone had suddenly looked in his direction. When he turned his head, he saw a young woman walking toward him.

She wore the long garment of an Outer Sect disciple, but it did nothing to conceal her curvaceous figure. She had a waist as slender as a willow tree, which only served to accentuate the rest of her curves, and make her seem incredibly beautiful. She had long legs, and a perky rear end, and as she approached, people couldn't stop from staring.

With her pretty face, and clear white skin that seemed so delicate it might be broken by a faint breeze, she oozed an attractiveness that could easily prove fatal to almost any man.



Bai Xiaochun was a bit disgusted to hear people gulping dramatically, even Xu Baocai.

Xu Baocai licked his lips, and his eyes shone with infatuation “That’s... Elder Sister Du, Du Lingfei!” he whispered excitedly. “She’s one of the five hottest women on the south bank! She’s the Immortal beauty of my heart.... Oh my goodness, she just looked at me!!”

“She’s looking at me!” Bai Xiaochun said derisively. He simply watched as Du Lingfei got closer. Suddenly, her phoenix-like eyes flickered with a murderous aura as she glared straight at Bai Xiaochun. She had long since come to admit that Bai Xiaochun’s skill with plants and vegetation exceeded hers. However, she was still filled with complete and utter revulsion for him. With a slight snort, she walked off to the side.

Xu Baocai stared at her in a daze, completely oblivious to Bai Xiaochun’s derision. In fact, he seemed more infatuated than ever.

“So Du Lingfei is going to take the test too....” Bai Xiaochun thought. After looking over the twenty pill furnaces, he calmed himself down and focused. “Ah, whatever, it doesn’t matter. I’m not here to compete with her. This is an exam administered by the sect, not a contest. Everybody has a chance to get promoted.”

Soon, Chen Zi’ang appeared, and when he noticed Bai Xiaochun, he hesitated for a moment, then grinned and called out a greeting. Bai Xiaochun smiled and clasped hands in response, after which Chen Zi’ang sat down off to the side to wait.

Eventually, even Zhao Yiduo showed up, whom Bai Xiaochun had first encountered outside the Missions Offices. Then, more and more people began to appear, and a good-sized crowd built up.

Before too much time passed, the main door of the Journeyman Apothecary Hall creaked open, and an old man walked out. He had a full head of white hair, and piercing eyes, and as soon as he appeared, everyone quieted down.

The old man's expression was calm as he strode forward with hands clasped behind his back. He came to a stop at the front of the square, looked around at all the Outer Sect disciples, then nodded his head and began to speak.

"I am surnamed Xu, and I shall preside over this test for promotion from apprentice apothecary to journeyman apothecary.

"The test will consist of one portion regarding plants and vegetation, and another regarding medicine concocting. To pass the portion regarding plants and vegetation, simply walk through the passageway." Elder Xu didn't seem to want to offer any further explanations. After speaking only three sentences, he simply closed his eyes and ignored everyone.

Even as Bai Xiaochun blinked in response, a long-faced young man walked out from the crowd. After clasping hands and bowing to Elder Xu, he strode toward the passageway leading under the giant pill furnace.

As entered the doorway of the passageway, a beam of light appeared, which surrounded him, then vanished. A moment later, the pill furnace trembled, then let out a five muffled reverberations.

Xu Baocai leaned over and whispered, “Five reverberations means that his skill with plants and vegetation encompasses the fifth volume....” He definitely deserved his reputation of knowing about everything in the sect.

Bai Xiaochun blinked again. Before coming, he’d had no idea of how exactly the test would be carried out. Having heard Xu Baocai’s explanation, he examined the huge stone pill furnace, and suddenly had the feeling that it must be connected to the stone steles outside the 10,000 Medicines pavilion.

“What do I do now...?” he thought hesitantly. “Zhou Xinqi’s fans are still combing the mountain for me.”

Soon, more people approached, most of whom received five reverberations. However, one of them only received four reverberations, upon which Elder Xu flicked his sleeve, sending that disciple spinning away.

“Elder Xu!” the disciple exclaimed, face flickering. “I thought volume four of plants and vegetation was the minimum requirement to be able to take the test!”

“The rules have changed. Now it’s the fifth volume.”

“But....” The young man stared in shock, then bitterly clasped his hands and bowed. Not daring to say anything further, he left.

This turn of events caused the sound of whispered conversations to swell. Xu Baocai’s eyes flickered with surprise, and he suddenly produced a tiny notebook, within which he began to take notes. Bai Xiaochun looked over and saw a page filled with lines of handwriting, each character as small as the head of a fly. Apparently it was a record of all matters pertaining to the sect, large and small alike. Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but admire how seriously Xu Baocai took the whole matter.

It was at this point that Zhao Yiduo stood up and entered the passageway. The reverberations echoed out six times, after which Elder Xu opened his eyes and nodded slightly. Zhao Yiduo clasped hands and then stepped out of the passageway.

Chen Zi’ang’s eyes flickered. He and Zhao Yiduo had never gotten along, so he snorted coldly and walked into the passageway, after which six reverberations could be heard.

After giving Zhao Yiduo a meaningful stare, and sat back down cross-legged off to the side.

The fact that both Zhao Yiduo and Chen Zi’ang had received six reverberations caused a buzz of envious conversation to rise up. At the same time, Du Lingfei’s eyes flickered, and she walked through the passageway. As she did, six reverberations could be heard, which caused even more envious gleams to appear in the eyes of the onlookers.

Murmured conversations instantly broke out.

“Chen Zi’ang, Zhao Yiduo, and Du Lingfei are all persons of outstanding talent within the Outer Sect. Not only have they mastered five volumes of plants and vegetation, but they also have command of the first volume of spirit creatures. I would say that they have a seventy to eighty percent chance of passing the test and being promoted to journeyman apothecary.”

“Historically speaking, anyone who takes the journeyman apothecary test having already mastered six stone steles will pass, as long as that disciple’s performance in medicine concocting isn’t lacking.”

Even as everyone discussed the matter, Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth. Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do about Zhou Xinqi’s fans. Just as he was about to take a step forward, a figure suddenly appeared off in the distance, speeding along the mountain path. It was a middle-aged man, his hair completely disheveled, but his eyes sparkling with life. Even before he arrived, his voice echoed out to be heard by all.

“I, Han Jianye, having spent seven years in secluded meditation, and have finally made a huge breakthrough in my skill with plants and vegetation. Finally, I have emerged once again into the world, not just be promoted to journeyman apothecary, but to become the top journeyman apothecary in the entire test!” Looking very proud and lofty, he flickered through the air toward the giant pill furnace’s passageway.

Elder Xu didn't pay the man any heed, not even deigning to open his eyes. However, everyone else in the crowd seemed astonished to have heard the name Han Jianye.

“Han Jianye? Who's that? I've never heard of him before.”

“Considering how old he is, he must be an Outer Sect disciple from seven or eight years ago.... He wants to be the top journeyman apothecary, which isn't a very easy thing to do.”

Even as everyone expressed their shock, Han Jianye stepped into the passageway, looking extremely proud and confident. Almost immediately, powerful reverberations began to echo out into the air.

One reverberation, two reverberations... five, six, seven... before anyone in the crowd could even react, eight reverberations echoed out from within the pill furnace.

Elder Xu's eyes snapped open, and he looked over at the middle-aged man, a broad smile of praise on his face.

“Five volumes of plants and vegetation, and three volumes of spirit creatures,” he said. “Excellent!”

Looking very excited, Han Jianye clasped hands and bowed to Elder Xu. Then he turned, and when he looked at Du Lingfei and the others, the pride in his eyes was very clear. Swishing his sleeves, he sat down confidently in front of the center-most of the

pill furnaces.

Finally, gasps could be heard from the crowd, as well as the clamor of conversation.

“Eight reverberations! Not only did he master everything about plants and vegetation, he even got through three volumes of spirit creatures!”

“It seems he might be able to do exactly as he said and become the top journeyman apothecary!”

When Bai Xiaochun witnessed what happened, he was left feeling quite underwhelmed. Therefore, when everyone in the crowd started getting excited, he almost couldn't believe it.

“He only mastered three volumes of spirit creatures, right?” he asked of Xu Baocai. “Why is everyone making such a big fuss?” If he remembered correctly, when it came to the third stone stele of spirit creatures, over a thousand people were listed as having passed it. Even the tenth stone stele had been passed by hundreds of people.

Xu Baocai rolled his eyes, feeling more contemptuous than ever of Bai Xiaochun. Of course, he didn't dare give voice to that contempt, and instead cleared his throat and said, “Elder Brother Bai, you just don't understand. To master all five volumes of plants and vegetation is hard enough as it is. The volumes of spirit creatures are even harder! Even mastering one of them is enough to make you the subject of much envy. Obviously, to master three

is even more shocking. Do you think everyone can be consummate Chosen like Zhou Xinqi or the little turtle? Look, just forget about those two. On all of Fragrant Cloud Peak, there are probably less than fifty people who have passed the stone steles of all five volumes of plants and vegetation plus all five volumes of spirit creatures!

“Each and every one of those people are dragons and phoenixes among mortals. Think about it! There are a lot of names on those stone steles, but those name lists are thousands of years old. Plus, many of those people have already moved on to the Inner Sect, leaving only their names behind here in the Outer Sect!

“Furthermore, you only need to master five volumes to take this test. This guy has eight! Just as he said, he’s definitely going to become the top journeyman apothecary, which will earn him the 5,000 merit point prize.”

Although Xu Baocai’s words were actually a bit contemptuous if you paid close attention, Bai Xiaochun didn’t really notice. Eyes gleaming with elation, he looked at Xu Baocai and said, “Did you just say that Zhou Xinqi and the little turtle are consummate Chosen? Are they really that awesome?”

“Of course! Especially the little turtle. He’s completely shocking. He’s the first person in a thousand years to get first place in all ten stone steles. Elder Brother Bai, I have to say, you really shouldn’t aim too high.” Even as the contempt in Xu Baocai’s heart rose to new heights, Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily. The more he was around Xu Baocai, the more he liked him. Clapping him on the shoulder, he suddenly strode forward.



Xu Baocai gaped in shock as Bai Xiaochun walked toward the passageway. Of course, Bai Xiaochun was somewhat well-known for his skill with plants and vegetation, considering that he had defeated Du Lingfei. It was a given that he would eventually take this test.

However, what happened next caused Xu Baocai's eyes to bulge. Bai Xiaochun strode proudly into the passageway, after which a flash of light could be seen, and the muffled reverberations began.

One, two, three... six, seven, eight!

Everyone became deathly quiet. However, the reverberations didn't stop. A ninth reverberation echoed out and then... a tenth!

RUMBLE!

When the tenth reverberation echoed out, Elder Xu's eyes shot open, and they glowed with unprecedented brightness. He looked over at Bai Xiaochun, completely shocked.

It must be stated that it would be rare enough for one of the thousands of Outer Sect disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak to master all ten of the volumes, including the five for plants and vegetation, and the five for spirit creatures. Virtually all of them would have already taken this test. For someone to be so patient as to wait until they had mastered all ten was something that Elder Xu had never seen, not until this very day.

Even Zhou Xinqi had taken the test after having mastered only nine.

Du Lingfei's eyes went wide as she stared at Bai Xiaochun standing there in the passageway. Although she had already known that he was far more advanced than her in his skill with plants and vegetation, she had never imagined that he would have reached such an astonishing level. Not only had he completely mastered plants and vegetation, he also had shocking skill with spirit creatures.

Her mind was spinning, and she could do nothing but gape blankly. She couldn't help but recall how she had demanded to compete with him in skill with plants and vegetation, and how he had cautiously and even nervously asked about her ranking. Then she thought about how anxious he had looked when he had agreed to compete.

As of this moment she realized that Bai Xiaochun's nervousness back then had been a front, concealing the wide smile that had blossomed in his heart.

“Bai. Xiao. CHUN!!” she thought, gnashing her teeth.

Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo also gasped and stared at Bai Xiaochun in astonishment.

As for Han Jianye, who had spent so many years in secluded meditation, he began to tremble. He was glaring at Bai Xiaochun,

his mind spinning, waves of shock crashing into him as he realized that Bai Xiaochun was definitely his lifelong archenemy.

“The most important part of the journeyman apothecary test is medicine concocting!” he thought. “He might be strong, but I refuse to believe that he can outdo me in concocting medicine. I spent seven years in secluded meditation just to take the top spot in this test!!”

At the same time, the surrounding Outer Sect disciples were gasping and even crying out in shock.

“That was... ten reverberations! That means he mastered all five of the volumes of spirit creatures too! He passed all of the stone steles outside the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion! There aren't even fifty disciples in the entire Outer Sect who can do that!”

“This guy has incredible patience! He waited to pass all ten of the stone steles before taking the promotion test!”

## Chapter 43: Slow... So Slow....

---

“Don’t tell me... he’s the little turtle!?!?” The crowd was in an uproar.

Of course, most flabbergasted of everyone was Xu Baocai, who was staring at Bai Xiaochun with eyes so wide they seemed to be on the verge of popping out of his head. Moments ago, he had despised Bai Xiaochun for not thinking much of having mastered three volumes of spirit creatures, but now, he clearly had every right to have that attitude....

“Mastery of plants and vegetation and mastery of spirit creatures.... Bai Xiaochun was clearly just messing with me!! But this is simply unbelievable. He’s only been in the sect for a few years! Could it be... that he really is the little turtle?” Gasping, Xu Baocai pulled out his little notebook and began to write down the new developments. Inwardly, he was rejoicing that he had chosen to smooth things out with Bai Xiaochun, and was also rejoicing that he hadn’t said anything too derisive earlier.

Even as everyone was giving voice to their shock, Bai Xiaochun walked out of the passageway, sighing. Actually, if there had been a way to conceal his accomplishments regarding the ten stone steles, then he would have. After all, there were still Inner Sect disciples among Zhou Xinqi’s fans.

Unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done about it. He couldn’t just give up on the promotion. Despite the fact that he had been forced to reveal the truth, when he saw how excited the crowds were, and when he heard people calling out his name, he

was actually quite moved.

“What wonderful fellow disciples. Ah, if only everyone were like that!” Sighing emotionally, and under the eyes of everyone in the audience, he selected a pill furnace and sat down.

Elder Xu looked thoughtfully at Bai Xiaochun. A smile flickered across his face, but quickly vanished. After recovered his composure, he calmly said, “The bag in front of you has ten sets of medicinal plants, which you can use to concoct ten tier-1 spirit medicines, specifically, Inkspirit Incense!

“You will be judged based on your success rate, with a minimum of two successes being the requirement to pass. Whoever has the most successes... will be awarded 5,000 merit points! You may begin immediately.”

The Outer Sect disciples in the audience instantly began to buzz with excitement in response to Elder Xu’s explanation.

“This time the test is to concoct Inkspirit Incense!”

“Inkspirit Incense isn’t the most difficult tier-1 medicine to concoct, but it’s not easy.... It’s not like Spirit Condensation Incense or other spirit medicines like that, which many apprentice apothecaries have experience with.”

“Hmph. They’re only refining the ways to test one’s qualifications in medicine concocting. Can’t you see what’s

happening? Before, they required four volumes of plants and vegetation, now it's five. They even increased the level of difficulty of the spirit medicine to be concocted. Presumably, things will only continue to get harder in the future."

As everyone discussed the matter, the group sitting in front of the pill furnaces in the square had very serious expressions on their faces. Although some of them smiled bitterly when they heard that the test involved Inkspirit Incense, they didn't allow themselves to be distracted, but instead opened the bags and began to inspect the medicinal plants.

Xu Baocai had mentioned the matter of the 5,000 merit points earlier. Now that Bai Xiaochun heard confirmation from Elder Xu, his heart was thumping. He was already running low on merit points, which he needed to get medicine formulas and medicinal plants.

"If I can get those 5,000 merit points, it will save me a lot of time and effort." With those thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun opened the bag, within which were the ten sets of medicinal plants, plus a jade slip, which was none other than the medicine formula for the Inkspirit Incense.

He didn't immediately begin to concoct the medicine, but instead settled his qi and cleared his mind, then began to study the formula.

He took his time, which was how he had grown accustomed to concocting medicine. Even the slightest question about anything needed to be analyzed completely until he felt completely

confident.

His initial research alone took him two hours.

By that time, Du Lingfei and everyone else had already finished inspecting the plants, and were beginning to actually concoct the medicine. In fact, most of them were more than half finished with their first batch.

It didn't take long before everyone except Bai Xiaochun was already in the middle of medicine concocting. Bai Xiaochun was the only one who was sitting there, looking thoughtfully at the jade slip. That sight left Xu Baocai somewhat shocked.

By now, the first batches of spirit medicine were coming out. Rumbling sounds began to emanate from the pill furnaces of everyone except Bai Xiaochun. Most of them had long faces as black smoke rose up, indicating that their first batches were failures.

Han Jianye, on the other hand, threw his head back and laughed loudly. His pill furnace was trembling, and a medicinal aroma began to spread out. Shockingly, a three-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense appeared.

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples all craned their necks to look.

“He succeeded with his first batch!”

“This Han Jianye sure has talent in medicine concocting!”

An excited expression appeared on Han Jianye’s face as he glanced around at the other test-takers. His gaze lingered for a moment on Bai Xiaochun, and when he realized that he was still studying the medicine formula, a look of disdain appeared in his eyes. Finally, he pulled out the second set of plants and began concocting a second batch.

Du Lingfei and everyone else all had unsightly expressions on their faces, and gritted their teeth as they began to work on a second batch.

Time passed. By the time the fourth hour of the test had passed, most of the group was finished with their second batch. Muffled rumbling could be heard as... not a single test-taker succeeded.

It was at about this time that Bai Xiaochun put the jade slip down. His mind was now permeated with the medicine formula for Inkspirit Incense. However, just when everyone thought he was about to begin, they were stunned to see him take out one of the medicinal plants and begin to study it closely.

“What is Bai Xiaochun doing? He already studied the medicine formula for four hours! What’s the point of studying the plants?”

“I know this is a test, but does he really have to go so slow...?”



Xu Baocai's eyes were wide with disbelief as he watched everyone else starting their third batches.

The audience waited in befuddlement as the sixth hour of the test arrived. By now, eighteen of the test-takers had all consistently failed. Soon eight hours had passed, then ten. Eventually, four people succeeded in concocting the Inkspirit Incense, including Du Lingfei, Chen Zi'ang, and Zhao Yiduo.

The aura of the incense spread out in all directions. Han Jianye was chuckling proudly at being the first person to concoct a second stick of Inkspirit Incense. Looking around proudly, his contempt for Bai Xiaochun grew.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun was studying the fourth of the medicinal plants. Occasionally he would even tear a perforation into the plant itself, which left the audience shocked. Even Elder Xu had noticed.

Time flew by. Soon, twelve hours had passed. Everyone failed in their sixth batch of spirit medicine, except for Han Jianye, who was the only person to succeed.

That caused quite an uproar, and even elicited a slight nod from Elder Xu.

“This Han Jianye has already concocted three sticks of incense! Nobody else even has more than one!”

“In tests past, two successes meant you passed the test, and four successes made you a Chosen. All Han Jianye has to do is concoct one more stick to become a Chosen!”

As everyone discussed the matter, a gleam of self-confidence could be seen flickering in Han Jianye’s eyes as he murmured, “I’ll definitely concoct a fourth stick of Inkspirit Incense. I’m going to be Chosen, and I’m going to be the top journeyman apothecary!”

Swishing his sleeve in grand style, he began to work on his seventh batch.

Du Lingfei’s face was ashen as she gritted her teeth and began working on her own seventh batch.

When the fourteenth hour arrived, Du Lingfei’s eyes shone with elation as a medicinal aroma began to spread out from her pill furnace. Even as black smoke rose up from everyone else’s seventh batches, she produced the only success!

“I’ve met the minimum, but mere promotion is not enough!” Du Lingfei constrained her excitement, taking a deep breath as she, along with the ashen-faced Han Jianye, began work on another batch.

In the sixteenth hour, more rumbling sounds could be heard as yet again... everyone met with failure.

As of this moment, of the nineteen other people besides Bai

Xiaochun who were taking the test, Han Jianye had three successes, Du Lingfei had two, Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo both had one, and everyone else... had nothing but failures.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was studying the last of the medicinal plants.

“This test is so hard....”

That was the thought running through the minds of the Outer Sect disciples in the audience. They could feel the anxious pressure building up. Most of the test-takers only had two sets of ingredients left. With the exception of Du Lingfei and Han Jianye, who had already met the minimum requirement, and Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo, who both had one success already, the other test-takers had to succeed with both sets of ingredients, otherwise they would fail completely.

Those remaining disciples were now extremely nervous. Essentially, this ninth batch was the most crucial batch; if they failed, then Elder Xu wouldn't allow them to waste the ingredients set aside for the tenth batch.

If that ninth batch failed, then... their test-taking effort would be a complete failure.

Filled with apprehension and nervousness, everyone focused completely on their ninth batches.... Each and every step received complete and utter attention; those who had already met the minimum requirement wanted to get a better final score, and for

those who hadn't met the minimum, they had to do everything they could right now to pass.

Bai Xiaochun, on the other hand... was sitting there holding the final medicinal plant. Apparently, he was considering some important question about that plant, as his brow was furrowed thoughtfully. By now... few people were paying attention to him.

The eighteenth hour seemed to pass very slowly. This was the moment everyone had been waiting for. Soon, rumbling sounds echoed out. As for the disciples who had not succeeded at all, they rose to their feet, faces pale, chuckling bitterly. After clasping hands to Elder Xu, they dejectedly left the square.

One by one, the disciples left, until soon, only six people remained concocting medicine.

Soon, rumbling sounds echoed out from the six test-takers' pill furnaces, and yet a medicinal aroma emitted from only one of those furnaces, the one belonging to Zhao Yiduo.

Zhao Yiduo's hands were clenched tightly into fists, he was panting, and his eyes were completely bloodshot. He was more excited right now than he had ever been before; he had met the minimum requirements. With two successes, he passed!

Some people were excited, some were depressed. Five people had failed, two of them being disciples who hadn't succeeded a single time. Sighing, they rose to their feet and left.

Chen Zi'ang couldn't be more on edge. He was glaring at Zhao Yiduo, heart filled with bitterness and anxiety. Then he looked with bloodshot eyes at the final set of medicinal plants.

Du Lingfei frowned, then closed her eyes to think. Han Jianye felt the least pressure of all, and yet, he wasn't happy to be stuck with only three successes. He wanted to break through to become Chosen.

"The last batch!" People took deep breaths as they looked out at the square, and the five people left behind. Han Jianye. Du Lingfei. Zhao Yiduo. Chen Zi'ang. And of course... Bai Xiaochun.

Three of them had already met the minimum requirements. Chen Zi'ang had one chance left to do so. As for Bai Xiaochun... people weren't even paying attention to him, and were actually beginning to wonder why he had even come. After eighteen hours, all he had done was study the medicine formula and the medicinal plants. Some people were even wondering... if he had just come to be a part of the excitement.

It was with unprecedented seriousness that Du Lingfei and the others began to focus completely on their tenth and last batch of spirit medicine. As everyone looked on with fixed gazes, the twentieth hour slowly passed.

Rumbling sounds could then be heard from Zhao Yiduo's pill furnace, after which black smoke rose up. He sighed. He had failed in the final batch, but at least he still met the minimum requirements.

In almost the exact same instant that Zhao Yiduo failed, Chen Zi'ang's pill furnace began to emit a medicinal aroma. His wasn't the only one. Medicinal aromas were also spreading out from Du Lingfei's and Han Jianye's!

In that instant, all three of their faces lit up with joy as they realized that they had succeeded!

"I did it! Four sticks of Inkspirit Incense! I took the top spot!!" Han Jianye shot to his feet and his excited laughter began to ring out in all directions. Du Lingfei sighed in relief. Although she hadn't reached the level of a Chosen, three successes was still astonishing.

Chen Zi'ang felt almost as if he had been resurrected from the dead, and began to laugh heartily.

As of this moment, the feelings that the four of them had been suppressing for the last two hours finally erupted out.

"What a difficult test! The fact that Han Jianye could succeed four times despite this level of difficult shows that he really is a Chosen!"

"Du Lingfei got three successes, Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo both got two.... They all met the requirements to be promoted. I bet if the test wasn't so hard, they all would probably have been able to get four successes!"

Even as everyone began to discuss the matter, as the friends of the test-takers were cheering in support, as Elder Xu nodded approvingly at Han Jianye and was about to announce that the test was over... Bai Xiaochun moved.

## Chapter 44: The Sun Is Rising

---

After fully studying the final plant, and resolving all of the issues he had, Bai Xiaochun continued to completely ignore all of the clamor around him. He had focused hard on the information in the jade slip, had become completely immersed in the Dao of plants and vegetation, and had even entered a sort of trance.

Nothing short of the crash of thunder and lightning would be able to break his concentration, nor did he even glance at the results of the others' concocting efforts.

Of course, that attracted the attention of some in the audience, including Xu Baocai. Curious expressions could be seen on their faces as they looked over, clearly wondering why Bai Xiaochun had spent so much longer in his initial observations.

"This Bai Xiaochun is just too slow. Everyone else is finished and he's just starting. Shouldn't the test be over by now?"

"Hmm. You know what, I don't think I ever heard anything about the journeyman apothecary promotion test... having a time limit...." It wasn't clear who exactly said that last sentence, but when people heard it, they began to turn toward Elder Xu, blank expressions on their faces.

Elder Xu hesitated for a moment, but the truth was that the journeyman apothecary promotion test really didn't have any time limit. Therefore, he continued to stand there watching Bai Xiaochun concoct medicine.



Han Jianye wasn't worried at all, and was even chuckling coldly, eyes flashing with disdain. At first, he had been worried that Bai Xiaochun would be a formidable opponent, but after the way this part of the test had played out, he was convinced that there was no way Bai Xiaochun could surpass him.

Du Lingfei's brow was furrowed; Bai Xiaochun rubbed her wrong no matter how she considered the matter.

Bai Xiaochun's movements were blindingly fast, and his eyes glowed brightly. To him, the entire world consisted only of that pill furnace. The various medicinal plants rapidly changed form as he kneaded them into pastes, broke them down into powders, or made other preparations. Then, after putting all of the ingredients into the pill furnace, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and pointed at the pill furnace, causing the Earthflame underneath to burn brightly.

Two hours flew by, and soon a strong medicinal aroma emanated out from the pill furnace. Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, causing a four-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense to fly out. As soon as it landed in his palm, he examined it, and then frowned.

Everyone in the audience had very serious expressions on their faces, and Elder Xu's eyes were flickering. However, just when everyone was expecting Bai Xiaochun to start his second batch, they realized that instead, he was simply... studying the incense.

“What is he doing??”

“He succeeded! Why hasn’t he started the second batch?”

Everyone was looking on, stunned.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was looking at the Inkspirit Incense, feeling quite unsatisfied. Although he had indeed succeeded, he knew that based on the ingredients he had used, the incense should have been seven inches long.

“What went wrong?” he thought. Then he contemplated the matter... for six hours.

Just when everyone was getting to the point where they were running out of patience, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered, and he produced a second set of ingredients and began to concoct. Everyone in the audience anxiously watched him work.

Yet again, two hours passed. This time, the medicinal aroma was even stronger than before as a five-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense flew out.

Du Lingfei’s face flickered, and shocked expressions could be seen on the faces of both Chen Zi’ang and Zhao Yiduo. As for Han Jianye, his eyes flickered, but his expression remained calm. Only he knew that, inwardly, he was starting to get anxious.

Of course, what made him anxious was not just that Bai Xiaochun had succeeded two times, but that... he might continue to succeed!

Under the shocked gazes of all present, Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve, sending the third set of medicinal plant ingredients out. His third batch was now beginning, and all of the Outer Sect disciples were watching closely.

Two hours passed in silence. Suddenly, the pill furnace shuddered, and a medicinal aroma even stronger than before filled the area as a six-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense appeared!

“Three times in a row! How... could this be happening!?!?”

“How is Bai Xiaochun doing this? Could it be that he has actually concocted Inkspirit Incense before?!” Cries of astonishment could be heard because of the successive successes; people could hardly believe what they were seeing.

Du Lingfei’s breath came in ragged pants as she glared at Bai Xiaochun, waves of shock battering her heart. Chen Zi’ang and Zhao Yiduo were both gaping dully.

“Three in a row....” Han Jianye thought, clenching his hands into fists. His eyes were now completely bloodshot. “He must already be familiar with Inkspirit Incense. Well, he got lucky with this batch, but the next batch will be a different story!”

Just when everyone was expecting Bai Xiaochun to start his fourth batch, he held up the six-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense, then frowned and rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

Then everyone waited... for ten hours.

If this sort of thing had happened with the first batch, everyone would have left. But after having seen Bai Xiaochun succeed three times in a row, they knew that a fourth success would push him past everyone else to the same level as Han Jianye. That was something everyone was itching to see happen.

“Bai Xiaochun takes way too long! It’s only a tier-1 spirit medicine! Why does he need so much time to think about it!?”

Of course, Du Lingfei and Han Jianye were the most invested of all, and were staring dead at Bai Xiaochun, completely unwilling to leave.

It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered brightly. His eyebrows shot up as he waved both hands, sending plants and vegetation flying out as he began his fourth batch. Everyone was now looking on in complete excitement.

Two hours later, rumbling sounds could be heard, but not the type that indicated a failure had been met. Instead, a powerful blast of medicinal aroma spread out, filling the entire area in the blink of an eye. Then, astonishingly, a seven-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense appeared!

The fourth batch was another success!

The audience went wild.

“Four in a row!”

“I can’t believe something like this actually happened.... Just how many times will Bai Xiaochun actually succeed!?”

“Two successes are the requirement to pass, and four makes you Chosen! If I remember correctly, Elder Sister Zhou Xinqi got seven successes back when she was promoted!” As the crowd clamored, Du Lingfei’s face turned very unsightly. Although she was aware that Bai Xiaochun’s skill with plants and vegetation far surpassed her own, to see that such a vast gap existed between them in terms of medicine concocting filled her with mixed emotions.

As for Han Jianye, he was grinding his teeth, and his hands were clenched tightly into balls. He was trembling, and couldn’t bear to believe what he was seeing. And yet, everything was happening right in front of him, making it impossible for him to deny it.

“Four successes! Four successes has to be his limit. The rest will definitely be failures!”

Everyone in the audience was now buzzing with speculation regarding how many total successes Bai Xiaochun would achieve. But then, they realized that Bai Xiaochun was simply staring at the Inkspirit Incense.

“What is this guy doing? He’s doing more studying?!” Although

they were a bit chagrined, the audience members weren't about to leave now. Instead, they sat there, waiting and watching, looking forward to seeing the results of Bai Xiaochun's next study session.

Sixteen hours passed before Bai Xiaochun finally took a deep breath. His eyes were completely bloodshot. Although no one else realized it, the fourth batch he had just produced had come very close to failing.

"This Inkspirit Incense is much, much harder than any of the other spirit medicines I've concocted in the past." Bai Xiaochun was prudent and meticulous. After thinking back to all the other batches he had produced so far, he identified what the problem was, and after confirming that he could prevent it from happening, began a fifth batch.

He was completely oblivious to any of the conversations around him; when he was concocting medicine, his level of focus exceeded imagination. It didn't matter what anybody said, he wouldn't begin to concoct unless he was absolutely confident in succeeding.

Everyone in the audience had been sitting here for so long that they were completely exhausted, and were having trouble staying focused, and yet they were now all craning their necks to see what was happening.

It didn't take long before more rumbling sounds could be heard, and a medicinal aroma spread out in all directions, a fragrant odor that sent shock into the hearts of everyone present.

The fifth batch was a success!

Han Jianye sat there dumbfounded, heart overwhelmed with bitterness. After a long moment, he simply sighed quietly.

This was the moment the crowd had been waiting for. Bai Xiaochun waved his sleeve and began the sixth batch.

Before long, more rumbling could be heard, and smell of incense spread out. The sixth batch was a success!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered. Not pausing for even a moment, he pulled out more medicinal plants and started his seventh batch. However, in almost the exact same instant that he started the seventh batch, an acrid odor suddenly wafted out. It was very faint, and could only be detected by Bai Xiaochun, and yet it caused his heart to begin pounding.

He performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and pointed out, reducing the Earthflame temperature. After manipulating the ingredients with the greatest care, he succeeded with the seventh batch!

However, this stick was only three inches long, and contained many impurities, leaving it on the verge of being low-grade, almost toxic. However, as far as the audience was concerned, that still counted as a success!

At this point, the audience was completely and utterly wrapped

up in what was happening. Everyone was panting in excitement, especially Xu Baocai, whose eyes glowed with disbelief.

“Seven successes.... Heavens! Bai Xiaochun actually succeeded seven times!”

“He’s just as good as Elder Sister Zhou Xinqi! I remember hearing that the only person to ever exceed eight successes was a disciple from years ago named Wang Qingshan, an Elder Brother who is now in the supreme position of being a Successor disciple!”

“Succeeding nine times... is completely unheard-of. Nobody has ever done it!”

The audience was in an uproar, but Bai Xiaochun was sitting there quietly, looking at the pill furnace. His eyes were bloodshot, and by this point, he wasn’t even thinking about the test. He was immersed in thoughts of concocting medicine, and was analyzing the near failure from all angles. Next, he pulled out the ingredients and began to examine them again to try to determine the cause.

“This spirit plant is called Inkfruit, and the ink elements within each one are slightly different....” He held the Inkfruit in his hand and continued to observe and analyze it.

Time passed, and more wry smiles could be seen on the faces of the audience as they realized what was happening. Although they were excited, Bai Xiaochun was so thoughtfully slow in medicine concocting that it could make one bristle with anger.



And yet, nobody was willing to leave. The Outer Sect disciples all sat there cross-legged, some of them meditating as they waited for Bai Xiaochun. Others were so exhausted that they leaned up against nearby boulders to sleep.

A strange expression could be seen on the face of Elder Xu. Coughing dryly, he sat there cross-legged, waiting.

Of course, Du Lingfei and Han Jianye weren't going to leave. Although Bai Xiaochun left them physically and mentally exhausted, they had no choice but to sit there quietly.

Everything was very quiet, except for the occasional snores which echoed out. And yet, people were still waiting, and watching Bai Xiaochun. Xu Baocai was among their number.

Hours passed, during which some people awoke from their sleep to find Bai Xiaochun sitting there in contemplation. They couldn't help but sigh.

"I can't believe he's still studying."

"The sun is rising...."

Eventually, after more than twenty hours had passed, Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked up, and his eyes were completely bloodshot.

## Chapter 45: I Could Kill You, Easy!

---

Bai Xiaochun was panting. By this point, he was focused to the point of tuning everything else out. He wasn't even worried about whether or not he would succeed. His eyes were bloodshot, and his mind was occupied with only one thing: how to be completely and utterly confident!

Unless he was totally confident, he wouldn't start the next batch!

When it came to concocting medicine, his cautious and prudent personality was fully on display.

However, even after all the thought he had put into it, he still couldn't figure out how to solve the problem without first standardizing the ink elements within the Inkfruit. Although that wouldn't count as changing the medicine formula, it would be a slight adjustment to it. After a moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered with determination.

"The only way is to adjust the formula on a case-by-case basis!" He quickly crushed the Inkfruit.

A squishing sound could be heard as juice flowed out, although Bai Xiaochun didn't send it into the pill furnace. Instead, he congealed it in the air in front of him, then began to make adjustments here and there.

Most people in the audience were surprised, but didn't really understand what he was doing. Even Bai Xiaochun himself didn't

really think that his actions were anything special; he just felt that this was the best course of action considering the circumstances.

However, Elder Tu had opened his eyes, and a gleam of shock flickered deep therein. Although he had been a bit surprised that Bai Xiaochun had succeeded seven times in a row, what he was doing now was far more shocking.

“This Bai Xiaochun is actually trying to adjust the medicine formula! Incredible! No wonder the Peak Lord told me to keep an eye on him while he was away from the mountain!” Elder Tu continued to observe Bai Xiaochun silently.

A moment later, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, flushing away the extra ink elements, leaving behind a drop about the size of a fingernail. After sending it into the pill furnace, he produced the rest of the medicinal plant ingredients and then began his eighth batch!

The pill furnace instantly turned bright red. This time, it didn't take two hours. After enough time passed for two incense sticks to burn, the pill furnace trembled, and a medicinal aroma spread out. The eighth batch had succeeded!

Elder Tu looked at the pill furnace, and what he saw was a seven-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense that was black with violet specks!

“That's almost mid-grade!” Elder Tu thought, his eyes shining brightly.

Bai Xiaochun could also tell that this stick of Inkspirit Incense was different than the others. Although he was initially confused, he suddenly realized why all of the other spirit medicines he had produced before were low-grade.

“The medicine formula isn’t standardized.... If you adjust things based on your current needs, you can concoct... mid-grade spirit medicines or higher!” Bai Xiaochun suddenly felt as if the world had been opened up to him. Feeling very excited, and before even waiting for the crowd to break out into an uproar, he started his ninth batch!

Everyone was panting, and nobody was talking. They were all completely and utterly shaken. They might have been excited before, but now that they had personally witnessed Bai Xiaochun succeed eight times in a row, they were in a state of complete and utter incredulity.

Not only had he surpassed Zhou Xinqi, he was now on almost the exact same level as the Successor disciple Wang Qingshan!

Before everyone could recover from their shock, Bai Xiaochun rapidly went about concocting the next batch. He only used the time it takes an incense stick to burn before rumbling sounds could be heard from the pill furnace, and a powerful blast of medicinal aroma spread out. The ninth batch... was a success!

“This is unheard-of!!”

“Nobody has ever succeeded nine times, and especially not with Inkspirit Incense! Bai Xiaochun spent an infuriatingly long time thinking, but... but his success rate is completely astonishing!!”

Xu Baocai’s mind was spinning, and his jaw hung wide open. Du Lingfei felt her heart being battered by waves of astonishment, and couldn’t help but think back to the competition, and how Bai Xiaochun had analyzed that grafted plant.

Han Jianye simply sighed bitterly. Although he was disappointed, he was no longer enraged. If Bai Xiaochun had surpassed him by a small amount, he might have continued to pursue a grudge, but now, he had to admit that he had lost....

“With only one more success, Elder Brother Bai will do something nobody has ever done, not even in ancient times! He... is going to pull off a miracle!”

“Boy was it worth it to come watch the test this time. We got stuck here for a few days, but it was definitely worth it!”

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun was the center of all attention. Everyone was panting, and their eyes gleamed with intense anticipation. Even Elder Tu felt completely shocked, and was staring with wide eyes.

Finally, Bai Xiaochun moved. His eyes shone with focus as he produced the final set of ingredients. After organizing them into the order that he would use them, he began to feed them into the pill furnace, then performed a double-handed incantation gesture

to stoke the Earthflame.

Time passed in complete silence. The only thing the audience could hear was the beat of their own hearts as they waited for the time it takes an incense stick to burn....

An intense rumbling sound could be heard from within the pill furnace. No smoke of failure poured out, and yet, neither did a medicinal aroma. Everyone was shocked.

“Did he fail?” Xu Baocai thought, so nervous that his tongue was sticking to the roof of his mouth.

Bai Xiaochun stared in shock, but then he suddenly realized what was most likely happening, and his eyes began to shine.

It was at this point that everyone watching could see a scintillating light shining out from the joints and cracks in the pill furnace. Elder Tu suddenly leapt forward to peer into the pill furnace, within which was a one-inch-long stick of Inkspirit Incense that was completely violet. His eyes danced with elation.

“Mid-grade!” he said, laughing loudly. Flicking his sleeve, he collected up all of the pill furnaces and sticks of Inkspirit Incense which had been concocted.

“The final round of the test is over. Bai Xiaochun, Han Jianye, Du Lingfei, Chen Zi’ang, Zhao Yiduo, you five have all been promoted to journeyman apothecary! Bai Xiaochun, you take the top spot

and... are awarded 5,000 merit points!”

The crowd dissolved into wild commotion, the sound of which echoed out in all directions.

“Ten successes! He got ten successes!!”

“Plus, the final batch produced... a mid-grade product! He’s only a journeyman apothecary, but can already concoct mid-grade spirit medicine!!”

Xu Baocai, Du Lingfei, Han Jianye, and everyone else present were completely stunned.

It was somewhat grudgingly that Bai Xiaochun watched the only mid-grade spirit medicine he had ever concocted be whisked away by Elder Tu. He was of a mind to give voice to his discontent, but Elder Tu seemed too imposing, and was clearly not going to return the incense.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and exhaustedly left the square. As he walked through the crowd, people looked at him with excitement and admiration. Obviously, the fact that he had succeeded ten times in a row was no fluke, and was something that an ordinary disciple could never do.

“Congratulations on pulling off a miracle, Elder Brother Bai! This is completely unprecedented!”

“Congratulations, Elder Brother Bai, I truly admire you!”

“Elder Brother Bai, I have some questions about plants and vegetation, do you think you could help a Junior Sister out....?”

Bai Xiaochun blinked. He had been so engrossed in medicine concocting that he had completely tuned everything else out. After seeing what a commotion he had caused, he quickly clasped hands and bowed to the audience.

At the moment, he felt nothing short of elated. Back when no one knew who the little turtle was, he had never been able to find the right opportunity to make a big debut. Now that he had, he was experiencing exactly the feeling he had hoped for.

As for the female disciples who were asking for his help, Bai Xiaochun instantly nodded in agreement. Furthermore, as for all of the disciples who were calling him Elder Brother Bai, he asked them to call him Bai Xiaochun, lest people be unaware of his full name.

Just as he was feeling exceptionally proud of himself, he suddenly caught sight of a young man in the crowd, glaring at him. Bai Xiaochun instantly recognized him as one of Zhou Xinqi's devoted fans. Bai Xiaochun's face flickered, and he quickly extricated himself from the crowd and sped off.

After hurrying all the way back to his log cabin, he realized that he was feeling a bit dizzy. Having spent days concocting medicine, he was completely drained, and instantly fell asleep on his bed.



He slept for two days straight.

In the afternoon of the third day, he opened his eyes, feeling completely refreshed. Then, he thought back to how he had personally concocted a mid-grade spirit medicine, and how Elder Tu had then taken it away. Sighing, he took a look at his identity medallion to confirm that 5,000 merit points had been added, and then felt a little bit better.

With those merit points, he could continue to work at concocting medicine, which would also help him cultivate the Undying Live Forever Technique. Next, he made a quick trip out of his residence to retrieve seven or eight medicine formulas from the sect. After picking one for vital energy replenishment, he spent some merit points to get a large quantity of medicinal plants.

The entire process went quickly, but he was jumpy with fear the entire time. Wherever he went, it seemed people recognized him, and he even noticed some of Zhou Xinqi's fans, who glared at him with cold smiles, then produced jade slips to transmit messages to their cohorts.

Bai Xiaochun nervously got all the medicinal plants he needed, then headed, not to his courtyard residence, but to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. Using the remainder of his merit points, he bought an entire year's worth of time, and then holed up.

"I was a bit careless this time.... Hmph. Just wait 'til I come out. I'm going to make a big breakthrough in my Undying Iron Skin,

and if you people mess with me.... Well, if you come at me one at a time, I'll take you out. If you gang up... then I'll just call for the Peak Lord!" Snorting coldly, he began to concoct medicine there in the workshop.

He could well imagine how, during those two days in which he had slept, word of him being promoted to journeyman apothecary had spread. In fact, it wouldn't take long before the entire Fragrant Cloud Peak was talking about it.

And of course, that was exactly what happened. Furthermore, many people were already speculating that Bai Xiaochun... was the little turtle!

There were too many coincidences for there to be any other explanation. Not only had he shown amazing talent with both plants and vegetation and spirit creatures, but Bai Xiaochun had concocted a mid-grade spirit medicine. He had even passed the journeyman apothecary test with ten successes in a row.

Zhou Xinqi's fans immediately sprang into action, as did Du Lingfei's fans. However, none of them realized how cautious Bai Xiaochun was, so much so that he would never return to his residence, but would instead stay at the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. Then they found out that he had purchased an entire year's worth of time in one of the workshops, and they were instantly enraged.

However, the Medicine Concocting Pavilion wasn't a place that they could just barge into. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun's new status struck fear into their hearts. Although they couldn't really do

anything to him, if they roughed him up to teach him a lesson, the sect wouldn't care. After all, people who provoked those above their skill level would get what they deserved.

However, there was nothing to be done now, so the group which had gathered to catch Bai Xiaochun dispersed begrudgingly. However, there was one of their number, a pock-faced young man, who looked at the Medicine Concocting Pavilion with a cold smile.

“You think that hiding in there will keep you safe from me? I couldn't care less that you beat up my cousin Chen Fei. However, you bullied my beloved Junior Sister Zhou, and also my most cherished Junior Sister Du. Plus, my favorite of all, Junior Sister Hou, won't stop talking about you. Bai Xiaochun, you might have talent in plants and vegetation, but killing you won't be any trouble at all for me!” The young man laughed coldly. He was none other than the Inner Sect disciple surnamed Qian, Qian Dajin!

Bai Xiaochun spent one carefree day after another in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, either concocting medicines or cultivating his Undying Live Forever Technique. As the days went by, he truly did advance by leaps and bounds in the Undying Live Forever Technique.

His skin became tougher and more durable, and he could move even faster than before.

“Another two days, and my Undying Iron Skin will be complete!” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and his eyes gleamed with elation.

However, it was on that very night at dusk that, all of a sudden, a green beam of light shot from the Missions Offices toward the Medicine Pavilion. It completely bypassed the protective shields surrounding the pavilion, and appeared right there inside of Bai Xiaochun's workshop.

Bai Xiaochun gaped in shock at the command medallion which was now hovering in front of him!

# Chapter 46: Mission For The Hall Of Justice!

---

The command medallion was pitch black, and in the very center was the character “Justice,” which emanated a bleak and somber air.

Even as Bai Xiaochun stared in at it shock, a cold voice echoed out into the workshop.

“Outer Sect disciple Bai Xiaochun. After an investigation carried out by the Hall of Justice, it has been confirmed that after being in the sect for several years, you have only accomplished a single mission, to raise a spirit plant. Because of this violation of sect rules, you must participate in a mandatory out-of-sect mission, which beings three days from now!”

From the cold and sinister nature of the voice, it seemed apparent that if Bai Xiaochun refused to comply, he would receive the strictest of punishments!

“The Hall of Justice!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes bulged, and his heart began to pound. At the same time, the command medallion transformed into a black glow, and then vanished.

Everything was dead quiet. Bai Xiaochun’s face flickered with various emotions as he pulled out his identity medallion. Sure enough, he found that a mandatory mission had been added.

He had completely forgotten about the rule about a minimum number of missions required for disciples on a yearly basis.

However, the abrupt arrival of the command medallion from the Hall of Justice was something that Bai Xiaochun found very odd.

After a moment of thought, he left his workshop, walked out of the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, and headed toward the top of the mountain.

“Something’s not right here. Why do I feel like a cold wind is running down my back...? Well, I’ve been in the sect for years now, and have never taken the initiative to go see the Peak Lord. I might as well go pay my respects and see if I can figure out what’s going on.” Bai Xiaochun was wrapped up in very important thoughts the entire way up the mountain. Eventually, he found Li Qinghou’s Daoist assistant, only to discover that Li Qinghou had been out of the sect for several months.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very bitter, and very nervous. Instead of returning to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, he went to find Xu Baocai. After all, Xu Baocai knew everything that was going on in the sect, so perhaps he would have some clue about what was going on.

Xu Baocai was still an Outer Sect disciple, and lived on a different part of the mountain than Bai Xiaochun. By now it was evening, and not very many people were out and about. Soon, Bai Xiaochun had arrived outside Xu Baocai’s courtyard residence.

This residence was not as remote as Bai Xiaochun’s, and was clustered together with seven or eight others. Now that it was dark, firelight could be seen shining out from several of the courtyards.

Bai Xiaochun ducked his head down to make himself inconspicuous. Instead of knocking on the main gate, he flew over the wall, after which he caught sight of Xu Baocai bent over a little notebook, writing.

“Xu Baocai,” he whispered.

Xu Baocai was startled, but once he saw who had come, he said, “Elder Brother Bai.”

A bit confused, he rose to his feet and invited Bai Xiaochun into his room.

“Elder Brother Bai, weren’t you in secluded meditation in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion?” he asked curiously. “What are you doing out here?”

“Xu Baocai, what do you know about the Hall of Justice?” Bai Xiaochun asked immediately.

Seeing the grim expression on Bai Xiaochun’s face, Xu Baocai could tell that something was wrong, and quickly responded, “The Hall of Justice? Well, there’s a southern Hall and a northern Hall, who administer the two different parts of the sect. They oversee the Outer Sect disciples and servants, but usually don’t do anything unless there’s been a serious violation of sect rules.

“If a violation does occur, they have a lot of power. There are all

sorts of punishments they can enforce. In fact, they even have the power to execute traitors. Essentially, the Hall of Justice is like a sword hanging over the necks of the Outer Sect disciples, ensuring that none of us ever dare to violate sect rules.

“If someone does, and gets noticed by the Hall of Justice, they’ll receive swift and severe punishment....

“Of course, although the Hall of Justice has a lot of power, that power is limited. As long as you don’t violate sect rules, then you don’t really have to worry about them at all.” As usual, Xu Baocai went on to give a very detailed description of the Hall of Justice to Bai Xiaochun, based on everything that he knew.

He even went on to tell Bai Xiaochun the grisly fates of some of the disciples who had run afoul of the Hall of Justice.

“Five hundred years ago, a traitor rose up within the Spirit Stream Sect. The Hall of Justice tracked him down for seven days before finally killing him and wiping out his soul!

“Three hundred years ago, an Outer Sect disciple flagrantly violated sect rules. Although the Hall of Justice gave him a chance to repent, he ignored it. In the end, the Hall of Justice reported the matter to the sect, and the disciple was punished in the Blackwind Abyss, where to this very day, he is constantly scourged by biting winds.

“A hundred years ago, the Mount Zhou Society planned an armed rebellion. Despite warnings from the Hall of Justice, they refused



to back down. When they finally made their move, the Hall of Justice executed all the cultivators from the Mount Zhou Society, sparing only the mortals.”

As Bai Xiaochun listened to all of this, his expression grew more unsightly than ever, and his heart began to pound.

“Are you telling me that normally the Hall of Justice gives a warning first, and resorts to serious punishment only if you don’t repent?”

“Yeah, exactly. That’s one of the limitations placed upon the Hall of Justice. Otherwise, they would have far too much power.” By this point, Xu Baocai had guessed that the Hall of Justice must have set their eyes on Bai Xiaochun. However, matters pertaining to the Hall of Justice were sensitive, and Xu Baocai was intelligent enough to look out for his own interests. Therefore, although he told Bai Xiaochun what he knew, he didn’t dare to get any more involved than that.

In the end, just before Bai Xiaochun was about to leave, Xu Baocai hesitated for a moment as he thought about Bai Xiaochun’s skill with plants and vegetation, and then suddenly lowered his voice and asked, “Elder Brother Bai, do you happen to know an Inner Sect disciple from Green Crest Peak named... Qian Dajin? He’s Chen Fei’s older cousin, and he also happens to be a member of the Hall of Justice.”

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, Bai Xiaochun left. As he walked along the path in the sect, he looked up at the moon and thought about everything Xu Baocai had said, which only

served to confirm what he had already surmised. In the end, he sighed.

“I didn’t offend anyone in the sect!” he thought, clenching his jaw. “Other than Chen Fei, there’s only the fans of Zhou Xinqi.... Qian Dajin. Qian Dajin!” After returning to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, he sat down cross-legged in the workshop and looked at the pill furnace. Then his face twitched.

“It’s pretty obvious that me failing to complete a sect mission every year is just an excuse. Something like that wouldn’t be noticed unless someone specifically looked into it, and even still, it isn’t a very big deal. Besides, I couldn’t possibly be the only person in the sect who has done that. Since Qian Dajin is a member of the Hall of Justice, he’s using his public office to avenge private grudges!” After more thought, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were growing increasingly bloodshot.

“If I go on this mission, he’ll definitely make sure something happens to me at some point. Why else would he go through all the trouble of setting this up? However, he would still have to be careful to make sure the sect doesn’t find out. Overall, I still have the initiative.

“If I ignore the mission order, then I would be falling right into his hands. He would be able to take control of the initiative, using his status in the Hall of Justice to directly punish me!”

Bai Xiaochun thought about it from many directions, but there was no perfect solution. Eventually, he took out his identity medallion and examined the mission. It only took a moment before

he realized there was a familiar name in the mission description.

“Hou Yunfei?” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide as he thought back to when he had first become an Outer Sect disciple, and the detailed introduction to the sect Hou Yunfei had given him. Then, he closed his eyes to think more.

This mission didn’t seem to be a difficult one. A few years ago, Hou Yunfei had accepted a mission outside of the sect, and would check back in every month with news. That was a common arrangement for disciples who took on long-term missions.

However, two months ago, contact was lost, and no news had come back.

Therefore, this new mission had been handed down. Three Outer Sect disciples would be sent to investigate, with no specific instructions regarding the clues they were to gather.

Search missions like this were common within the sect. All the disciples had to do was investigate a bit, turn up some clues, and then come back to the sect to let someone follow up further.

Furthermore, for an Outer Sect disciple to go missing wasn’t a very important matter as far as the sect was concerned. Of course they were still disciples, so the matter had to be handled eventually.

That was why missions like this existed in the first place.

Bai Xiaochun thought about it further, and after weighing all the options and facts, clenched his teeth.

“Fine, I’ll take the mission.” Panting, eyes bloodshot, he immediately began to concoct more medicine. If he was going to go out of the sect on a mission, then he needed to have a major breakthrough with his Undying Iron Skin.

Two days later, Bai Xiaochun’s body was shaking, and his skin was vibrating. Suddenly, a wave of blackness spread out across him, which quickly vanished. However, if you looked closely, you could just barely see red streaks of light flashing across him.

“The black is iron, the red is bronze!”

When he pushed down on his skin, a sound like ringing metal echoed out. Next, he shot to his feet and confirmed that he was much faster than before.

After a few more tests, he leaped up into the air and pinched his thumb and index finger together. There were no cracking sounds this time, but rather muffled booms. They weren’t very loud, and yet Bai Xiaochun could tell that this move of his was at least twice as powerful as before.

“Breakthrough with my Undying Iron Skin!” he thought excitedly. As of this moment, he was a bit more confident regarding the mission.

“It’s too bad I can only concoct tier-1 spirit medicine appropriate for the fifth level of Qi Condensation and lower.” Bai Xiaochun stood there in the workshop feeling a bit disappointed. However, time was limited, and he simply couldn’t produce the type of tier-2 spirit medicine appropriate for the eighth level of Qi Condensation and lower.

Because of that, his cultivation base couldn’t progress very much, and remained in the great circle of the sixth level of Qi Condensation.

“Tomorrow at dawn I leave the sect....” he thought anxiously. This would be his first time truly leaving the sect since he had joined, and he didn’t feel safe at all. In fact, he even took out the shield he had acquired from Chen Fei and performed a threefold spirit enhancement on it. That didn’t leave him feeling very safe, though. Next, he performed spirit enhancements on the leather clothing he had worn in the competition.

After more thought, he went out in the middle of the night and found Big Fatty Zhang, to borrow his big black wok that supposedly had an Earthflame spell formation built into it. Even still, he didn’t feel at ease. However, there was nothing more to be done. Looking very anxious, he returned, not to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, but his courtyard, where he waited for the sun to rise.

“Qian Dajin, you just wait until I get to Foundation Establishment. Then I’ll show you a thing or two!” Bai Xiaochun was more nervous than ever, and his eyes were completely

bloodshot. He was scared of dying, after all, and now that he was no longer a newcomer to the sect, he was well aware of how the cultivation world worked.

For the entire night, his imagination went wild as he thought about all the bad things that could happen, until eventually... the sun rose.

# Chapter 47: Xiaochun Ventures Out Of The Sect

---

At dawn, when the first ray of sunlight poked out into the sky, Bai Xiaochun felt his identity medallion vibrating. He stood there at the front of his courtyard, looked back at what had been his home for the past two years, and let out a long sigh.

“I’m definitely going to need to be very careful. I absolutely must not lose my poor little life....” Bai Xiaochun had a very anxious look on his face. He had eight layers of leather clothing on, and was wearing Big Fatty Zhang’s huge black wok on his back. Although he was actually relatively skinny, having dressed up in this fashion made him look almost spherical.

With a very serious look, Bai Xiaochun left Fragrant Cloud Peak and headed toward the main gate that marked the border of the south bank. On the way, the numerous disciples who looked at him all stared in shock at his unusual getup.

He scowled miserably the entire time, and whenever he ran into people he knew, he would simply wave goodbye to them. Soon he was approaching the main gate, whereupon he saw two people who had arrived ahead of him. One of them was a young man sitting cross-legged in meditation. The other was a young woman who was pacing back and forth in front of the gate, but who currently had her back to him, and yet looked familiar.

“Du Lingfei?” he thought, a look of shock appearing on his face.

It was at this point that Du Lingfei also caught sight of him, and her jaw dropped. Then she noticed what he was wearing, and her brow furrowed.

“You’re the last person in the team going to investigate Elder Brother Hou’s whereabouts?” she asked.

“Yeah, what a coincidence....” he replied with a dry cough. Then he looked from Du Lingfei over toward the young man. Although his face was expressionless, a murderous aura rippled off of him, and as soon as Bai Xiaochun looked over at him, he opened his eyes and looked back, an enigmatic half-smile on his face.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart twitched. After analyzing the matter, he had come to the conclusion that the easiest way for Qian Dajin to do something to him was to place a friend within the mission group. Then, after they all left the sect, that friend could strike at him secretly.

At the moment, he found both Du Lingfei and this young man to be worthy of suspicion. And yet, he acted completely at ease, and even smiled widely at the young man.

“Bai Xiaochun at your service,” he said. “Elder Brother, you are...?”

The young man smiled back and replied, “Feng Yan of Green Crest Peak.”



Bai Xiaochun quickly clasped hands in respect. “Oh, Elder Brother Feng, I should have known it was you. At first glance you’re obviously an extraordinary individual. This is my first mission outside of the sect, so I really hope you can show me how it’s done, Elder Brother Feng.” It only took a moment for Bai Xiaochun to assess that Feng Yan’s cultivation base was at the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

“No problem. You flatter me.” A flicker of scorn passed through Feng Yan’s eyes. The only reason he’d agreed to take the mission was that Inner Sect disciple Qian Dajin had promised him a lucrative reward to secretly kill Bai Xiaochun.

As far as he was concerned, that wouldn’t be difficult at all. All he had to do was be careful and make it look like an accident; Bai Xiaochun was as good as dead.

The only thing he had to be careful about was to make sure that Du Lingfei didn’t see. Of course, he was mostly convinced that Du Lingfei had taken the mission for the same reason he had, because of Qian Dajin.

As for Du Lingfei, she was currently frowning. She had never imagined that accepting a mission outside the sect would result in her being stuck with one of the people she despised the most. After all, no one had forced her to take this mission; she had selected it on her own. Although there might be some danger associated with it, it was a relatively simple mission with a hefty reward of merit points.

She had been stuck in the great circle of the fifth level of Qi

Condensation for some time now, and needed some Cloudsoaring Incense to break through, which of course required merit points. As soon as she thought about Cloudsoaring Incense, her revulsion for Bai Xiaochun stirred.

“The lily-livered rat!” she thought, glaring at Bai Xiaochun in disgust. She especially despised his sphere-like appearance with all the clothes and the black wok, which made it more obvious than ever that he feared death.

Snorting coldly, she completely ignored Bai Xiaochun and turned toward Feng Yan to clasp hands and bow.

“Elder Brother Feng, now that we’re all here, please produce the Windskiff. The sooner we get this mission done, the sooner we can come back.”

Feng Yan gave a slight smile, then slapped his bag of holding, causing a white beam of light to fly out. A blast of wind could be felt as the beam transformed into a small white ship, about six meters long.

Fluctuations of spiritual power emanated off of the ship, transforming into an extraordinary pressure.

Bai Xiaochun looked it over and immediately blurted, “Elder Brother Feng, what’s that?”

This was his first time seeing anything like this. As the ship

hovered there in midair, it was obvious that it was some type of vehicle. Even as Du Lingfei's eyes flickered with scorn, Feng Yan smiled.

“This is a Windskiff. When missions require us to go some distance away from the sect, we can rent ships like this from the sect to make things easier. We can save some of our own spiritual power, at the cost of some spirit stones.” With that, he leaped up into the air and settled down into the ship.

Du Lingfei quickly followed, as did Bai Xiaochun. The ship wasn't very big, and was somewhat cramped, but there was still plenty of room for the three of them. Bai Xiaochun sat down in the very back and began to study ship even more closely. The more he looked at it, the more he realized that it truly was an incredible item.

“One of these days,” he murmured, “I'm going to get one of these for myself.”

Seeing Bai Xiaochun looking like a complete country bumpkin, Du Lingfei couldn't hold back from sarcastically remarking, “Even if you sold yourself into slavery you couldn't afford one!”

Bai Xiaochun looked over at Du Lingfei, measured her up, then nodded.

“True. But if I sold you, I could definitely afford one.”

“YOU!” Du Lingfei’s phoenix-like eyes went wide, and she was just about to say something more when Feng Yan sent the Windsiff flying off into the distance in a beam of prismatic light.

As they sped along at top speed, whistling through the air, a shield sprang up around the ship, creating a barrier against the wind. Although they could hear the wind buffeting the shield, the inside of the ship was very calm.

Meanwhile, back on Fragrant Cloud Peak, in the Journeyman Apothecary Hall, Elder Xu, who had been in charge of the promotion test, was looking at a jade slip and frowning slightly.

“The Hall of Justice circumvented Fragrant Cloud Peak to force Bai Xiaochun into accepting an outside mission?” After examining the jade slip a bit further, his frown faded away. After examining the details of the mission, he realized that although there might be some danger involved, it was nothing deadly.

Then he thought about what Li Qinghou had mentioned about Bai Xiaochun’s personality. “If the kid’s a bit lazy, then some punishment isn’t uncalled for.”

Finally, he put the jade slip down and continued to concoct medicine.

At the same time, Qian Dajin stood outside his Immortal’s cave in the Inner Sect, watching the ship flying off into the distance, and a cold smile appeared on his face.

“With Feng Yan’s cultivation base, secretly killing Bai Xiaochun should be as easy as flipping over his hand. Bai Xiaochun... you might have exceptional skill with plants and vegetation, but unfortunately, you’ll never have a chance to do anything with it. You’re dead!” A sinister gleam appeared deep within Qian Dajin’s eyes. Smiling, he turned and headed back into his Immortal’s cave.

The azure sky stretched out in all directions. Bai Xiaochun sat there on the ship, feeling somewhat nervous, but at the same time looking out excitedly as the scenery changed.

Off in the distance he saw numerous mountain peaks that looked like swords sticking up into the sky, part of a mountain range that looked like a slumbering dragon. There was also... a massive, shocking river!

“The Heavenspan River....” he said, taking a deep breath. After becoming an Outer Sect disciple, had done a lot of research, and had learned that the entire cultivation world relied on the Heavenspan River.

It was actually the source of all spiritual energy.

That was why all of the sects were located in areas near it. Furthermore, the further you went into the Upper Reaches of the river, the stronger the spiritual energy was.

Although the Spirit Stream Sect was technically in the Middle Reaches, even that position had allowed them to stand strong and tall for ten thousand years. According to what Bai Xiaochun had

read, the Spirit Stream Sect hadn't always existed in its current position. It had previously been located in the Lower Reaches. But then an extraordinary Patriarch had appeared among the countless sects and cultivator clans there. After distinguishing himself in intense fighting, he gained the approval of a higher ranking sect, and thus earned the qualifications to establish his own sect in the Middle Reaches.

“Supposedly, the sects in the Upper Reaches of the Heavenspan River are so powerful that the Spirit Stream Sect can't even compare to them. Furthermore, according to the legends... there are even more terrifying sects at the source of the river.” Bai Xiaochun forced himself to calm down, and reminded himself that he needed to be extra careful in this mission.

Off in the distance, the Heavenspan River looked golden, almost like a huge churning sea. Furthermore, hugging the river were four towering mountain peaks.

“That must be the north bank of the Spirit Stream Sect,” Bai Xiaochun thought. Also visible was the main peak of the Spirit Stream Sect, which arched over the Heavenspan River like a huge bridge!

“Mount Daoseed!” Bai Xiaochun had actually seen all of this when Li Qinghou had first brought him to the Spirit Stream Sect. However, at that time he had been a mere mortal. Now that he was an Outer Sect disciple, he got a completely different feeling when looking at it.

The ship shot away from the sect at top speed, following the

rippling water beneath as they headed toward the Lower Reaches.

“Junior Sister Du, Junior Brother Bai, I presume both of you have already examined the details of the mission,” Feng Yan said coolly, his voice so light that it was almost hard to hear. “We’re heading to an area in the Lower Reaches of the Heavenspan River called the Fallenstar Mountains. Junior Brother Hou’s last message came from that area. The Fallenstar Mountains mark the boundary of the Spirit Stream Sect’s sphere of influence. The rest of the mountains count as the territory of the Blood Stream Sect.

“We might find ourselves in some danger on this mission. However, by preparing ourselves mentally, and also being as cautious as possible, we will likely avoid any major problems.

“However, our final destination is quite a distance away, and will take quite a few spirit stones to get there. Most of our time on this mission will be spent traveling, but with our Windskiff, we will be able to bypass some of the more difficult terrain.” With that, a cold gleam flickered in his eyes before he closed them in meditation.

Du Lingfei ignored Bai Xiaochun and began to perform breathing exercises.

Bai Xiaochun felt more vigilant than ever. Despite also sitting cross-legged and closing his eyes, he was really pondering which among these two had been sent by Qian Dajin.

“It’s unlikely to be Du Lingfei,” he thought. “Which means... there’s an eighty to ninety percent chance that it’s Feng Yan!”

## Chapter 48: The Big Wide World

---

A day later, when the first spirit stone was completely used up, Feng Yan put the Windskiff away, and the three of them stood atop a mountain peak under the evening sky, watching the sun slowly set over the horizon. Soon, darkness blanketed the lands.

At the foot of the mountain, the dense jungle echoed with the roars of animals and wild beasts. The air was very humid.

“After we get past this jungle, we can rest,” Feng Yan said coolly. “What do you two think?” He looked at Du Lingfei and Bai Xiaochun.

“It’s dark,” Bai Xiaochun pointed out. “That jungle might have some dangerous wild beasts in it; why don’t we just fly over it with the Windskiff?”

“Take a break on your own, if you want,” Du Lingfei said with a cold snort. “It’s just some trees.” Not concealing her disdain for Bai Xiaochun’s fear of death, she flashed into motion, heading directly toward the jungle.

A glimmer of scorn stirred deep in Feng Yan’s eyes, but he smiled nonetheless and then shot down the mountain.

Bai Xiaochun frowned as he watched the two of them leaving. Finally he sighed, and followed them down the mountain toward the jungle, more vigilant than ever.



The humidity increased when they entered the jungle, and there were even some spots which were marshes or bogs. Animals appeared occasionally, but these were three Qi Condensation cultivators. They didn't slow down at all as they proceeded along, gradually forging their way deeper and deeper into the jungle.

Time passed. Eventually, the night deepened. By the time the moon rose, they were already about halfway to the others side. So far they hadn't encountered any fierce beasts. The trip had gone very smoothly. Bai Xiaochun was in the rear position, and even the slightest sound or movement would cause him to leap in fright. Du Lingfei's scorn grew stronger.

"Watch out!" Bai Xiaochun suddenly blurted, stopping in place with a very uneasy expression on his face.

Du Lingfei laughed coldly, and was just about to say something sarcastic when all of a sudden, a wild wind blasted toward them, along with an acrid odor. Du Lingfei's face flickered, and she looked out into the jungle to see countless eyes staring back.

They were bright red, and in almost the exact same instant that she saw them, the sound of flapping wings could be heard. Numerous bats appeared, each one about the size of a hand, flying in their direction.

"Two-headed Bats!" exclaimed Feng Yan. "Their venom dries up the blood and seals the throat! Split up and meet at the mountain peak on the other side of the jungle." Face flickering, Feng Yan

burst into motion, heading off at top speed.

Du Lingfei's pupils constricted, and she waved her hand in front of her, throwing out a paper talisman. As it burned, a blue light spread out, covering her with a shield and also increasing her speed. She picked another direction and sped off. Looking over her shoulder as she left, she was shocked to find that Bai Xiaochun had long since disappeared.

Bai Xiaochun had begun fleeing as soon as the wind kicked up. Of course, Bai Xiaochun was very careful and perceptive, and was extremely attuned to danger.

Even as he fled, the bats approached, causing a droning sound to fill the air. They quickly split up into three groups, which began to pursue the three disciples.

A cold smile appeared on Feng Yan's face as he sped through the jungle, and he quickly put away the stick of incense that he had just been holding. That stick of incense was what had attracted the bats, and was also why he had chosen to pass through this jungle on the way to their mission. He had sensed that this would be a likely location to contain Two-headed Bats.

"The weakest of them are at the third level of Qi Condensation. Bai Xiaochun, don't blame me that someone wants you dead." Laughing coldly, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a wooden stick. After blowing a breath of air onto the stick, it ignited with black flames that caused the bats to let out piercing shrieks. Apparently, they hated those flames, and thus instantly dispersed.

Feng Yan smiled and then continued onward, feeling much more at ease.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was speeding along through the jungle being pursued by numerous bats. However, the bats couldn't match his speed, and before long, there was quite a distance between the two of them. Occasionally, a beam of sword light would flash out, and a bat would scream and fall out of the air.

Bai Xiaochun ran along, and after enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, he looked over his shoulder and frowned.

"It sure was strange for all those bats to suddenly show up," he thought. He walked back a bit and found one of the bats he had killed with a flying sword, and after examining it closely, his eyes gleamed.

"These aren't Two-headed Bats, they're Violetvein Bats! They're just as venomous, but they're different from Two-headed Bats in that their fangs are the main ingredient for the tier-2 spirit medicine Bloodburning Incense!

"Back in the sect, you can sell fangs like this for fifty merit points apiece." Bai Xiaochun was immediately delighted. Not very many people would recognize that these bats were actually listed in the fifth volume of spirit creatures.

Feeling very excited, he began to collect the corpses of the bats. It didn't take long before he had ten bats, from which he began to

extract the fangs.

“These bats aren’t that strong after all....” he said, chuckling. Soon, a shield sprang up around him, and he began to search through the jungle. Before long, an entire group of Violetvein Bats was flying toward him.

He quickly performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, sending a flying sword bursting out toward the bats. Its speed was incredible, and before they could even get close to him, miserable shrieks filled the air, and numerous bats began to fall to the ground. The few that made it past the sword slammed into his shield and were sent spinning away.

Bai Xiaochun collected the dead bats. Realizing that he was actually in no danger, he felt more at ease than ever. Puffing his chest out proudly, he continued to search through the jungle.

It was in that fashion that he made his way along, collecting more and more fangs....

Four hours later, Feng Yan made his way out of the jungle to the appointed meeting spot on the mountain peak. There, he sat down cross-legged, a slight smile on his face as he waited.

Another two hours passed, and Du Lingfei shot out from the trees, looking very bedraggled. As she sped up the mountain, she looked back anxiously at the dark jungle. Eventually, she reached Feng Yan, and realized that Bai Xiaochun was nowhere to be seen.

“Bai Xiaochun hasn’t come out yet?” she asked.

Feng Yan sighed and shook his head. “I wish Junior Brother Bai all the best. Unfortunately, Two-headed Bats are most active at night. If we go back in looking for him, we would be in a lot of danger.” In order to make things look even more realistic, he didn’t rest, but instead craned his neck anxiously toward the jungle, as if he were waiting for Bai Xiaochun to appear.

Du Lingfei maintained her silence. Although she hated Bai Xiaochun, she didn’t hate him so much that she wished him dead. After all, they were fellow members of the same sect. Finally, she sat down cross-legged and looked down at the jungle, sighing.

Time passed, and soon it was almost dawn.

After waiting through the entire night without seeing Bai Xiaochun, Du Lingfei was getting a very uneasy feeling.

Feng Yan rose to his feet. After having stayed up the entire night, his eyes were bloodshot as he looked dejectedly toward the jungle. “If he hasn’t appeared by now, I’m afraid it means that Bai Xiaochun... has met with disaster. It’s all my fault. If I hadn’t suggested to go through the jungle, Junior Brother Bai wouldn’t have... ai.”

“Elder Brother Feng, don’t blame yourself,” Du Lingfei said. “Who would ever have thought that there would be Two-headed Bats in this place? Maybe Bai Xiaochun isn’t dead yet. Besides, if he is dead, then as fellow disciples, we should go retrieve his corpse!”

She was unsure of exactly what sort of emotions she was experiencing, which was a very strange sensation. Although Bai Xiaochun annoyed her, she somehow felt disturbed. After all, there was no deep grudge between the two of them.

Feng Yan sighed and nodded seriously. “You’re right, Junior Sister Du. No matter what has happened, we can’t give up on him.”

With that, the two of them prepared to head back down the mountain to begin the search.

However, it was only a moment later that they caught sight of Bai Xiaochun strolling out from within the trees, yawning. As soon as he was out of the jungle itself, he stretched lazily.

Du Lingfei’s eyes went wide, and Feng Yan almost couldn’t believe what he was seeing as Bai Xiaochun casually began to walk up the mountain path.

He almost looked like he had just woken up from a good night’s sleep. He seemed excited and energetic, as opposed to Feng Yan and Du Lingfei, who were weary from a night without rest.

Soon, Bai Xiaochun was at the top of the mountain. When he caught sight of Feng Yan and Du Lingfei, he hurried over and called out, “Good morning! Elder Brother Feng, Elder Sister Du, that jungle is way too scary! I almost lost my little life.”

Bai Xiaochun truly had rested well that night. After clearing the entire jungle of bats, not only had he profited handsomely, he'd found the bats' cave, where he had experienced wonderful night of sleep.

An unsightly expression could be seen on Du Lingfei's face as she glared at Bai Xiaochun. Snorting coldly, she thought back to the complicated feelings she had felt, and suddenly felt even more annoyed with Bai Xiaochun.

A cold glitter passed through Feng Yan's eyes, although his expression was one of joy. "Junior Brother Bai! I'm so glad to see you safe. We worried about you the entire night."

Bai Xiaochun chuckled, and although his expression seemed normal, deep within his eyes, a cold gleam flickered.

Soon, the three of them were on their way again, seated in the ship. Considering what had just happened, Bai Xiaochun suggested that they fly on the ship at night and proceed along on foot during the day. In rare fashion, Du Lingfei agreed, and as for Feng Yan, after a moment of thought, he nodded.

Thus, they proceeded along down the Heavenspan River as they headed toward the lower reaches.

A month passed.

This was the farthest Bai Xiaochun had ever traveled in his entire

life. He saw numerous mountains and jungles, places where there was no sign of human habitation at all, and everything was like a huge wilderness.

At one point in their travels, the ground began to quake, and Bai Xiaochun looked off into the distant mountains to see something completely astonishing. It was an enormous giant covered in thick fur, which caused the ground to shudder with each step it took.

The sight of the giant caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp.

One night when they were flying along, lightning crashed off in the distance, and Bai Xiaochun saw... an enormous bird that was just as large as Fragrant Cloud Peak. As it whistled along through the air, countless bolts of lightning danced across its body. The mere sight of such a creature flying along in the middle of the night was completely astonishing.

The most memorable thing Bai Xiaochun saw was during the daytime when he caught sight of a beast on the south bank of the river. It had four stumpy legs, and a head as huge as a mountain. Suddenly, a huge 30,000-meter golden crocodile burst out from within the Heavenspan River and gobbled up the first creature. As the crocodile sank back down into the water, it cast a cold glance at Bai Xiaochun and the others.

That single glanced caused their minds to reel, and blood to ooze out of the corners of their mouths. Splitting pain tore at their eyes, and it took a long moment for them to recover.



Bai Xiaochun shivered and then muttered, “Terrifying. The outside is so terrifying!”

## Chapter 49: Luo Chen Clan

---

Although Feng Yan had been on many missions outside the sect, this was his first time traveling so far away. Even his scalp numbed after what had just happened, let alone Du Lingfei, who was petrified.

Thankfully, none of the incredibly powerful creatures they encountered showed any interest in attacking them. At the most, they would look over curiously. Apparently, the auras cast off by the group of three caused such creatures steer clear of them.

Bai Xiaochun got the feeling that it was because they were disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect. Although this area was far away from the sect, it was still within their sphere of influence.

Despite the fear the group felt, they continued onward. After the first month of travel, they made contact with the sect on a pre-appointed day, informing them of their current location. The same thing happened after the second month. It was around that time that they reached the area in the Fallenstar Mountains which was the border of the Spirit Stream Sect's territory.

Along the way, Feng Yan had considered making a secret strike against Bai Xiaochun, but the things he was seeing along the journey left him unnerved. He was in no mood for fighting, and when you coupled that with how cautious Bai Xiaochun was being, and how close he stuck to Du Lingfei, Feng Yan was simply too apprehensive, and couldn't find a chance to make his move. In the end, he was forced to simply bide his time.

When Feng Yan looked at Bai Xiaochun, an imperceptibly sinister flicker could be seen in his eyes.

“So, he’s really determined to kill me, huh....” Bai Xiaochun thought, eyes narrowing. “Hates me that much....” Bai Xiaochun was getting worried. He was a perceptive person, and was now very sure of what was going on in Feng Yan’s head.

The Fallenstar Mountains were a mountain range that swept from north to south. They looked endless, like an enormous sleeping dragon that split apart the lands.

In fact, even the sky looked different above the mountains, almost as if it were tinged with blood.

According to the legends, many years ago, a star had fallen from the skies and slammed into the earth, causing some of the lands to collapse, and other parts to rise up into the form of this mountain range.

The mountains were covered with dense jungle and filled with wild beasts. However, numerous rare types of plants and vegetation could be found there. Because of that, there were always cultivators willing to go in and brave the danger, however terrifying it might seem.

“These are the Fallenstar Mountains,” Du Lingfei said. The long journey had left her exhausted, so to catch sight of their final destination after all this time caused her to sigh with relief.

“The last messages sent to the sect by Junior Brother Hou came from this area,” Feng Yan said, producing a magical device from his bag of holding: a [Feng Shui compass](#).

The Feng Shui compass had a silver needle on it, which was currently spinning around in circles.

“According to sect rules, disciples on outside missions are supposed to notify the sect of their location every month. This Spirit Stream Compass should help us locate Junior Brother Hou’s last known position.” Even as he spoke, the silver needle on the Feng Shui compass suddenly pointed off in one particular direction.

“Got it!” Feng Yan said, flashing into motion. Du Lingfei’s expression flickered as she followed along behind him.

Bai Xiaochun looked out over the Fallenstar Mountains, and the thick vegetation which covered them. It was like a sea of plants, within which could be heard the cries of various beasts. Even the occasional roar echoed out.

Bai Xiaochun had a very serious expression on his face as he activated the shield from his jade pendant. With that in place, not even the slightest breeze would get past him unnoticed. Only then did he cautiously follow after Feng Yan.

Feng Yan and Du Lingfei proceeded along without pausing for a moment, speeding along through the Fallenstar Mountains until they found themselves deep in a valley. The valley was filled with

trees that had been growing together for so many years that their branches were all interlocked. The knotted and gnarled bark added to the effect; if it were nighttime, the entire scene would be extremely terrifying.

After proceeding along through the valley for two hours, they suddenly came to a stop. Feng Yan looked down at the Feng Shui compass, the needle of which was pointing toward a tree with a trunk so wide that ten people could circle around it with arms extended.

Feng Yan looked at Bai Xiaochun and then pointed toward the huge tree. “Junior Brother Bai, please go investigate.”

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, then looked the tree over. Seeing nothing initially suspicious, he tapped the jade pendant hanging at his waist, causing the green shield to grow a bit stronger. He also placed some paper talismans onto his body before finally edging closer.

“So afraid of dying, and yet you still want to practice cultivation?!” Du Lingfei gave a cold harrumph. She have never liked Bai Xiaochun, so even though she herself was afraid of the dangers they had witnessed, to see him so incredibly terrified of dying made her look down on him even more.

Bai Xiaochun didn’t have the time to worry about Du Lingfei. Cautiously approaching the tree, he noticed a portion of bark that seemed to have grown recently. Taking out a flying sword, he cut away that portion of the tree and found that a jade slip was hidden inside.

After removing the jade slip from the tree, Bai Xiaochun scanned it with divine sense, whereupon his expression flickered, and he tossed the slip over to Feng Yan.

Within that jade slip was a single fragment of information.

I found some other clues, and I'm going to the Luochen Clan to get proof....

After looking at it for a moment, Feng Yan frowned, and then handed the jade slip to Du Lingfei. Du Lingfei looked at it, whereupon her expression turned grim.

"The Luochen Clan...." she murmured after a long moment. Then she turned to stare deeper into the Fallenstar Mountains.

These mountains were very large, and filled with numerous natural resources. Considering that this place was on the very edge of Spirit Stream Sect territory, where it bordered with the territory of the Blood Stream Sect, it was only natural that the Spirit Stream Sect would have the area guarded. Those guards were none other than... the Luochen Clan.

The Luochen Clan was a relatively large clan, which had stood guard in the Fallenstar Mountains for a thousand years. Every generation of the clan had Foundation Establishment Patriarchs. Generally speaking, the mere threat posed by such people was more than enough to help them in their duties of guardianship.

In fact, the mission instructions even said to make contact with the Luo Chen Clan if they ran into any danger.

However, Hou Yunfei's jade slip seemed to indicate that the Luo Chen Clan... was where he had been heading to find some sort of evidence. After that was when he lost contact.

"What do you guys think?" Feng Yan asked. "Should we go check out the Luo Chen Clan?" Feng Yan glanced over casually at Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei.

Bai Xiaochun immediately said, "Elder Brother Feng, Elder Sister Du, having found this jade slip, our mission is complete.... We should put safety first. What's the point in going on?" This entire place made Bai Xiaochun feel as if an invisible pressure was weighing down on him.

Du Lingfei hesitated for a moment. If they went back now, they would only be able to acquire the minimum amount of merit points. However, if they investigated further, they might be able to get more.

Feng Yan could see that Du Lingfei was hesitating, and he frowned, thinking about how going back now might reduce the chances he had to kill Bai Xiaochun.

After a moment, he said, "I think we should go to the Luo Chen Clan and look around. We've come all the way here, how could we simply go back now? After we find out exactly what befell Junior

Brother Hou, we might even be able to get help from the Luo Chen Clan in finding him. If we do, we'll be rewarded with many more merit points.

"Furthermore... as long as we don't go into the depths of the Fallenstar Mountains, we should be relatively safe. Besides, if you're worried about the Luo Chen Clan, don't forget that all of the cultivator clans in Spirit Stream Sect territory have special seals placed into their blood, making it impossible for them to turn traitor. How could they possibly treat us with any disrespect?" After he finished speaking, Feng Yan looked over slowly at Du Lingfei.

She nodded. After all, what he said made sense. "Very well. We'll go to the Luo Chen Clan to look around. Who knows, maybe Junior Brother Hou left the Luo Chen Clan, and then went missing."

Seeing that she had agreed, Feng Yan smiled. Then he turned to look at Bai Xiaochun, and his gaze grew a bit colder.

Frowning, Bai Xiaochun asked: "We accomplished the mission, why let ourselves get dragged into side issues?"

"If you're so scared, then just don't come with us," Du Lingfei said, turning a cold shoulder to Bai Xiaochun as she headed off.

"Junior Brother Bai," Feng Yan said, "I'm responsible for evaluating our performance on this task. We're supposed to make our decisions unanimously. If you don't come with us, it will make it hard to make my evaluation." With an enigmatic smile, he began



to follow Du Lingfei. In his opinion, Bai Xiaochun was sure to come along. If he didn't, Du Lingfei would be able to corroborate the fact that he had committed dereliction of duty. When that happened, the Hall of Justice surely wouldn't let things slide.

Bai Xiaochun's face darkened, and his blood began to surge through his veins as he stared with bloodshot eyes at Feng Yan walking away. He might be afraid of death, but as of this point, he was coming to the conclusion that he needed to take control of the situation. Only by settling things with Feng Yan could he ensure that his own position was stable.

"Feng Yan, you're forcing my hand!" he thought. After standing there reticently for a few breaths of time, he bowed his head for a moment, then strode forward to follow Du Lingfei and Feng Yan. Soon, they disappeared into the jungle.

Four hours later, they were still hurrying along. Evening was falling, and the sun was setting, ensuring that the jungle was slowly getting darker and darker.

"We're here!" Feng Yan suddenly said. The three of them stopped walking and looked off into the jungle. Up ahead, the trees thinned out, and numerous limestone boulders could be seen protruding out of the ground.

Numerous courtyard houses were visible, which were organized into the larger form of a mansion that could apparently house hundreds of people. At this time of evening, a clan would normally be at its most active, but unexpectedly, the mansion was completely dark and quiet. Considering the darkness of the sky,

the entire place seemed almost abandoned.

The only light provided was by two lanterns which hung at the main gate. Even though there was no wind, the two lanterns swayed back and forth, casting flickering shadows onto the guardian stone lions beneath them.

The scene caused Feng Yan and Du Lingfei's faces to flicker.

As for Bai Xiaochun, as soon as he laid eyes on the mansion, a feeling of impending danger rose up in his heart. It felt like every inch of flesh on his body wanted to scream.

“Something's off about—” Feng Yan said, his heart thumping. However, before he could even finish speaking, the main gate slammed open, and a vile wind blew out. At the same time, a figure emerged noiselessly through the gate.

# Chapter 50: Bizarre Courtyard

---

The courtyard gate opened, and Du Lingfei, Feng Yan and Bai Xiaochun were completely on guard as they peered inside. Bai Xiaochun was so nervous that he started slapping paper talismans all over himself.

The figure which had just appeared held a lantern in its hand, and stood in the opened gate, wreathed in shadows as it gazed at the three of them.

“Why, might I ask, have the three of you come to the Luo Chen Clan on this dark evening?”

The flickering light of the lantern just barely revealed a young man, standing there looking at them calmly. He wore a long, green robe, and his face was pale and devoid of any color of blood.

After seeing that it was a person who had appeared, Feng Yan and Du Lingfei breathed sighs of relief. Somehow, the creepy feeling they had experienced moments ago had subsided a bit.

Feng Yan clasped hands and said, “Hello, Fellow Daoist. We are disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect, paying a visit to ask a few questions.”

By this point, Du Lingfei had noticed the numerous shields which were flickering around Bai Xiaochun, and her brow furrowed in response.

Bai Xiaochun didn't notice Du Lingfei's look. For some reason, the fact that a young man had appeared hadn't caused his sensation of intense danger to lessen at all.

"Ah, Fellow Daoists from the Spirit Stream Sect," the young man said. "Please, come in, and we can discuss matters...." The flickering of the lantern cast shadows on the young man's face, making it difficult to see him clearly as he turned and walked off.

The courtyard gate then opened wide to allow the three disciples to enter.

Feng Yan hesitated for a moment, then walked through the gate. Du Lingfei followed along behind him. As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked around for a moment before gritting his teeth and cautiously entering the courtyard.

Even as the large gate closed behind them, the two stone lions beneath the lanterns outside suddenly turned to look in the direction the gate, their eyes flickering with a blood-colored light.

Inside the courtyard was a green limestone path that wound through various plants and decorative rocks. Faint moonlight shone down, casting everything into partial shadow. The only light came from the lantern, which swayed back and forth in the young man's hand.

The four of them walked along the path, surrounded by gloomy silence. This place almost seemed like a different world than the

one beyond the gate.

On the right-hand side of the path were several fruit trees, laden with red fruit. Strangely, despite a lack of any breeze within the courtyard, the leaves on those trees suddenly rustled.

Du Lingfei and Feng Yan seemed more on guard than ever, and Bai Xiaochun, who was last in line, looked around cautiously in all directions. For some reason, those rustling fruit trees seemed very bizarre.

Gradually, a smell like that of fresh blood rose up, faint, but simultaneously distinct.

Bai Xiaochun's heart began to thump, and he was just about to say something when, all of a sudden, fruit began to fall off of the fruit trees, landing on the ground and rolling toward Bai Xiaochun and the others. Strangely, faces could be seen on the fruit, child-like faces with broad smiles that almost seemed to have been painted on.

“La la la! Hello!”

Arms and legs sprouted out of the fruit, and as they ran toward Bai Xiaochun and the others, they clasped hands and then began to skip in circles around the shocked group of three.

At the same time, the fruits began to cry out in excited voices: “Auntie said to be good and not cry! We can only laugh! Ripe fruit

is the best fruit!”

Their voices were very charming and sweet as they danced around and began to sing children’s lullabies. Now that they were so close, it was possible to smell a sweet fragrance wafting about. It was so sickly sweet, in fact, that upon inhaling it, Bai Xiaochun and the others felt as if they were about to puke their guts out.

When the fruit got too close to the young man with the lantern, he completely ignored them, and even stepped on some of them, crushing them. However, the crushed fruits simply crawled back to their feet, smiling as they continued to dance and sing.

“What the hell are these things?!” Feng Yan exclaimed, eyes flickering. He waved his sleeve, causing a gust of wind to kick up and send some of the fruits flying away. After splatting onto the ground, they lurched back to their feet and re-joined the circle, laughing just as loudly as before.

Bai Xiaochun felt goosebumps rising up all over him, and by this point he was fully surrounded by flickering shields.

Du Lingfei looked at the fruits all holding hands and singing, and her facial expression flickered with fear. Pushing down the disgust in her heart, she gritted her teeth, and her phoenix-like eyes flashed with anger. She was just about to perform an incantation gesture when suddenly, the fruits’ faces fell in terror.

“Auntie’s coming!!” they cried, running pell-mell back to the tree and leaping up into their original positions. Soon, their laughter

and singing had faded away, and they looked like nothing more than ordinary fruit.

The young man from the Luo Chen Clan didn't look back at them, but they could hear his voice as he said, "Those are some spirit fruits the Patriarch brought back from the depths of the Fallenstar Mountains. What do you think of their singing, Fellow Daoists? They love to sing."

Unsightly expressions appeared on the faces of Feng Yan and Du Lingfei as they followed along.

Bai Xiaochun was still in the very back. Suddenly, the cold feeling of fear rose up inside of him as he realized that... another set of footsteps could be heard!

Step, step, step....

It was impossible to determine when exactly this development had occurred, but as of this moment... there were clearly five people walking along the path!

Perhaps those footsteps had been mingled in with theirs from the moment they had entered the courtyard, and they hadn't noticed because of the strange fruits. But now, in the silence that followed the fruits' outburst, the sound of the additional footsteps was extremely conspicuous.

The echoing footfalls caused Bai Xiaochun to shiver. What was

most frightening was that the footsteps were coming from right behind him. Suddenly, an icy breeze seemed to run down his back, as if someone were behind him, breathing on him.

“Hey guys...” he said, “did any of you realize... there’s another set of footsteps!?” As the hairs on the back of Bai Xiaochun’s neck rose up, Feng Yan’s face flickered as he also detected the footsteps.

Du Lingfei’s pupils constricted, and she began to pant.

The three of them suddenly stopped walking, and as they did, the sound of the other footsteps vanished.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding. Gritting his teeth, he slowly turned his head to find himself staring into the eyes of a young woman wearing a red robe!

Her robes swayed gently, and her face was as ashen, as if she were dead. She smiled oddly at Bai Xiaochun for a moment before her lips twitched, and she said, “This fire won’t do, help me.”

The suddenness of what had just occurred caused Bai Xiaochun to leap into the air and scream. The red-robed young woman suddenly transformed into a streak of light that vanished in the blink of an eye.

Bai Xiaochun’s face was pale white as he looked around, but nothing was there... except for the echoing sound of his own scream.



Du Lingfei and Feng Yan looked around in fright. Although they didn't see any unusual figure like Bai Xiaochun did, their hearts were still pounding.

Then, a woman's voice suddenly rang out, singing a song. The lyrics drifted throughout the courtyard, strange and mysterious, almost like a lullaby being sung to soothe a baby. The mere sound of it caused the darkness to seem even more spine-tingling than before.

"Good little baby, it's time to sleep; the wind is blowing and the flames do leap; don't you weep and don't make a peep...."

"Enough with the parlor tricks!" Feng Yan blurted, clearly nervous. He instantly performed an incantation gesture, summoning a flying sword, which began to swirl around him.

Simultaneously, the young man with the lantern turned around to look at them. The flickering light from the lantern made him appear stranger than ever.

"What are you standing there for? Come on, let's keep going." He smiled, a smile that was somehow very abnormal.

Feng Yan took a deep breath, and then his eyes glinted with a fierce light as he said, "No, we're not going anywhere. Look, we're here to investigate the disappearance of one of our fellow disciples. Fellow Daoist, do you happen to remember anyone like us coming around here about five months ago?"

Du Lingfei had already pulled out a magical device, and her eyes were shining in concentration.

“No, I don’t think so,” replied the young man. His softly spoken words floated out into the air and seemed to harmonize with the woman’s singing voice.

“Fellow Daoist,” Du Lingfei suddenly said, “how come none of your fellow clan members are around?”

The young man’s smile widened to the point of looking unnatural. “Oh they’re out on business. Are you done with your questions?”

“Yes, we’re done here,” said Feng Yan. “We’ll take our leave now.” With that, he turned to walk the other way back down the path. Du Lingfei followed suit, and as for Bai Xiaochun, he had long since taken to flight, and was further on ahead of them.

The young man’s smile was now so wide that the sides of his mouth began to rip open, almost as if his head were about to be torn in half! “If you don’t want to go any further, the least you could do is stay behind... stay behind to keep us company....”

The lantern suddenly turned a greenish color, making the entire courtyard even darker than before. Even as the words left the young man’s mouth, he suddenly began to float through the air toward Feng Yan.

Feng Yan's face fell, and he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, sending his flying sword speeding toward the young man. A boom rang out as the young man let the sword stab through him. Then, his smile widened even further as he shot toward Feng Yan.

Panting, Feng Yan fell back, simultaneously pulling out a black medicinal pill, which he threw down onto the ground. A rattling boom echoed out as the pill then exploded.

The charging young man was hit by the blast and sent tumbling backward, his body riddled with wounds. However, he apparently didn't feel any pain whatsoever. Smiling the same as ever, he arced through the air as fast as a kite on a windy day, to once again charge toward Feng Yan.

In the spot where the medicinal pill had exploded, numerous glowing lines were now visible, all of which emanated a strong aura of death as they began to form together, as if they were repairing themselves.

As soon as he saw the designs on the ground, Feng Yan cried out in alarm, "There's a spell formation here! It's a Shadowhell Formation!!"

At the same time, the green limestone beneath Du Lingfei's feet began to vibrate, and then eyes popped open upon them. Emaciated, corpse-like arms as skinny as twigs stretched out. Just beneath the surface of the skin of those arms were countless,

worm-like creatures, wriggling and writhing. Those arms... grabbed Du Lingfei's right leg.

Voices rose up from the green limestone, sinister, fear-inspiring voices.

“It hurts when you step on us....”

“Come. Come be with us....”

Du Lingfei's face was ashen. She quickly performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing a flag to fly out from her bag of holding. It instantly transformed into two mist beasts, which swirled around her defensively. Simultaneously, a flying sword appeared, and the sword light that shimmered out severed the hands which had grabbed onto her leg, allowing her to fall back.

As for Bai Xiaochun, the woman's singing suddenly grew louder in his ears.

“Don't you weep and don't make a peep....”

# Chapter 51: Elder Brother Feng, Such A Good Guy!

---

Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it would explode. Eyes crimson, he let out a powerful shout as he slapped more and more paper talismans down onto his body, causing more and more shields to spring up. Soon, he was surrounded by a barrier almost two meters thick.

Almost in the same moment that all the shields sprang up, the red-robed woman suddenly lunged out of the darkness toward Bai Xiaochun.

A bang could be heard as she pierced roughly thirty percent into the shield barrier before being stopped in place. Then she screamed, a scream that was apparently capable of piercing through the shields. When the ear-splitting sound stabbed into Bai Xiaochun's ears, he began to lose consciousness.

Shocked, he bit his tongue hard, which made things clear just in time to see the woman transforming into a swarm of countless red beetles, which then began to batter against his shield.

However, the shield was too thick, and the red beetles were incapable of piercing through the seventy percent that remained. After bouncing back, they flew back and re-formed into the shape of the red-robed woman.

She stared at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, then began to laugh as she charged toward him once again.

Simultaneously, popping sounds could be heard as the ornamental rocks began to ripple and rise up, transforming into Stone Golems. The fruit trees also sprouted arms and legs, wrenched themselves out from the ground and began to walk forward toward Bai Xiaochun and the others. Especially bizarre was the fact that the fruit on the trees began to laugh and sing nursery rhymes again.

One of the trees joined the red-robed woman to specifically target Bai Xiaochun.

“Puppets!” Du Lingfei gasped.

Bai Xiaochun was trembling violently. In all the years in which he had lived, he had never experienced such a sensation of imminent danger. As the woman closed in on him, he quickly performed an incantation gesture, drawing upon all his spiritual energy as he waved his finger at her.

Instantly, his wooden sword flew out at top speed, a black streak that kicked up a huge blast of wind. Then, a boom echoed out as the sword stabbed into the woman’s head.

The woman let out a shrill scream, and her body suddenly dissolved into a mass of red beetles, which twitched and spasmed as they fell down onto the ground and then shattered into pieces.

The wooden sword didn’t vanish; after stabbing through the woman’s head, it continued to speed onward toward the fruit tree

behind her.

It stabbed through the tree, which lurched to a stop and then suddenly exploded. Instantly, the fruit on the tree shriveled up, and yet continued to sing happily even as they died.

Everything that was happening caused the hair on Bai Xiaochun's body to stand on end. Thankfully, his wooden sword was extremely powerful, and after stabbing through the tree, it continued to sail through the air and then blasted a hole into the nearby wall. As soon as the hole appeared, though, tentacle-like tendrils began to swirl out from the broken sides, as if the wall were preparing to re-form itself.

“Get out through that hole!” Du Lingfei cried, instantly flickering into motion. However, Feng Yan was the closest of all of them to the hole in the wall. Wincing at the pain of wasting such a valuable item, he produced another of the black medicinal pills and then threw it down in front of the young man with the lantern. A huge boom echoed out. Feng Yan then borrowed the force of the resulting explosion to fly toward the hole.

Just when he was on the verge of shooting out through the hole, though, his face fell, as two huge stone lions leapt in from outside. Roaring, they charged, one of them toward Feng Yan, the other toward Bai Xiaochun.

Astonishingly, these were the same two stone lions which had been standing guard outside the main gate!

“You can’t escape,” said the young man with the lantern. “Everyone from the Spirit Stream Sect... shall DIE!” He began to laugh as he once again began to fight with Feng Yan.

When Feng Yan saw that the hole in the wall was already beginning to mend itself, he roared, hands flashing in a double-handed incantation gesture as he summoned a head-sized fireball. That fireball emanated blistering heat as it expanded, sending a wave of flames out in all directions.

The stone lions were shoved back, and the young Luochen Clan cultivator’s face flickered. There were also two Treants who were caught up in the flames, one of which exploded.

The other Treant tried to fall back, but was then directly hit by Du Lingfei’s deadly flying sword.

Rumbling booms echoed out as green sap exploded out from the destroyed Treants. At the same time, it was revealed that inside of the two Treants were emaciated, gasping figures, whose life force seemed to have been almost completely absorbed.

One of those figures collapsed, unconscious, whereas the other struggled to open his eyes, and then looked excitedly at Du Lingfei.

“Elder Brother Hou!” she cried, having instantly recognized Hou Yunfei. She immediately scooped him up into her arms.

At the same time, the weakened Hou Yunfei grabbed Du Lingfei’s



arm and poured his last remaining bit of spiritual power into her. “The Luo Chen Clan has turned traitor. We have to get out of here and warn the sect!!”

Du Lingfei’s spiritual energy instantly swelled. Gritting her teeth, she held Hou Yunfei in her arms as she shot toward the hole in the wall with even greater speed.

When Bai Xiaochun looked over, he instantly recognized Hou Yunfei. Then, he flickered into motion as he dodged the stone lion and sped toward the hole in the wall.

As of this point, Du Lingfei was now closest to the breach in the wall, with Feng Yan and Bai Xiaochun close on her heels. The fastest of them all was Bai Xiaochun, who was quickly closing the distance between himself and Du Lingfei.

Feng Yan’s face was pale white. The fireball he had just unleashed had taken quite a toll on him. However, after noticing the speed with which Bai Xiaochun was moving, his eyes suddenly flickered with a cold glow, and he held up his hand, within which could be seen a black medicinal pill.

“Junior Sister Du, you have to get word back to the sect! I’ll give you a bit of extra power!” With that, he flung the black medicinal pill down into the space between Du Lingfei and Bai Xiaochun.

As the medicinal pill exploded, a powerful force blasted out, pushing Du Lingfei toward the hole even faster than before. Then, a plopping sound like splashing water could be heard as she burst

out.

In contrast, Bai Xiaochun was blocked by the explosion, and was suddenly set upon by the stone lion. Instantly, his eyes turned bright red.

“Feng Yan!!” he bellowed. A wind blasted out as the stone lion pounced. Just as Bai Xiaochun was about to dodge, three Treants closed in. There were now four puppets all attacking him simultaneously, making it impossible to evade.

A popping sound could be heard as his shields glittered brightly and then began to shatter. Even the green shield from the jade pendant faded and shattered. Although the majority of the force of the blow was dissipated, the stone lion was extraordinary, and its attack landed fully on Bai Xiaochun’s chest.

The massive force sent Bai Xiaochun flying, his entire body shaking.

“Junior Brother Bai!” Feng Yan cried said. Although a cold smile twisted his lips, his words sounded bitter and lamenting. And yet, he didn’t slow down at all; in the blink of an eye, he passed into the rippling hole in the wall. Just when he was about to burst through to the other side, the young Luochen Clan cultivator let out a piercing shriek, then suddenly exploded into a mass of countless chunks of flesh, all devoid of blood, which then shot toward Feng Yan.

Before Feng Yan could pass through the gap in the wall, the

chunks of flesh wrapped around him and began to drag him backward.

Feng Yan let out a roar of rage as he was pulled out. By this point, the hole in the wall was on the verge of closing up completely.

After gritting his teeth for a moment, he then bit down on his tongue and spat out a mouthful of blood, which landed onto his flying sword. The flying sword instantly turned crimson. Instead of shooting out in attack, it then exploded, transforming into a cloud of shrapnel that shot back toward him.

Although it was injurious to himself, the hail of shrapnel also managed to slash away the chunks of flesh which had grabbed ahold of him!

He was now freed, but was also covered in a mass of cuts and wounds. The pain from his mangled flesh threatened to render him unconscious, but he was still able to clench his jaw and shoot back toward the hole in the wall.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun had been slammed by the lion's paw, sending him tumbling backward, screaming. And yet, even as his scream was still echoing out into the air, Bai Xiaochun looked down in surprise at his chest to discover that, although his clothing was shredded, his skin hadn't been harmed at all. In fact... he didn't even feel any pain.

After performing a quick inspection, he confirmed that... although the situation had seemed extremely dangerous... he

hadn't been hurt in the least.

The stone lion's blow had sent him flying, but other than that, it had done virtually nothing.

Even as his elation grew, the Treants closed in, and one of them punched him in the back. Although he was thrown forward, he felt no pain at all, whereupon he threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

"I can't believe I'm actually so strong! Fudge! What do I have to be afraid of?!" Enlivened, and now fully confident, he shot into the air toward the gap in the wall, moving with even greater speed than before. In the blink of an eye, he was at the gap.

Feng Yan was now about halfway through the gap, and didn't even notice Bai Xiaochun and his sudden burst of speed. In his mind, Bai Xiaochun had probably already been killed by the numerous puppets.

Just as Feng Yan was about to free himself, a furious gleam appeared in Bai Xiaochun eyes, and he reached out toward Feng Yan's shoulder, which was already outside of the hole.

"Free at last!" Feng Yan laughed. But then, he suddenly felt a huge force dragging him back through the hole.

"No!!" he howled. Before he could even see what was dragging him, he felt his bag of holding slip away, and then he was flung

deep into the courtyard, away from the gap.

It was only at this point that he saw Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he howled, eyes bloodshot. However, he was now cut off by the two stone lions. Booms rang out, followed by a miserable scream.

“Elder Brother Feng!!” Bai Xiaochun screamed, simultaneously leaping through the hole in the wall.

Just as he emerged on the other side, the hole finished closing up.

He was now outside, no longer in the courtyard of the Luo Chen Clan. As for Du Lingfei, she had continued to run as soon as she had emerged, and was now waiting some distance off at the edge of the forest. When she saw Bai Xiaochun appear, she was just about to call out to him when he suddenly began to wail miserably.

“Elder Brother Feng!! Not only did you give me your bag of holding to help me escape, you also held off the puppets. Oh, Elder Brother Feng!”

After hearing Bai Xiaochun’s words, Du Lingfei felt horrible. However, the gap was closed, and Bai Xiaochun was just standing there in grief and indignation, so she quickly said, “Bai Xiaochun, come on, let’s go!”

Not needing any further coercion, Bai Xiaochun began to run, tears streaming down his face. Helping Du Lingfei support Hou Yunfei, they vanished into the forest.

Looking over his shoulder, Bai Xiaochun frowned sadly and said, “Elder Brother Feng, such a good guy....”

Du Lingfei was very upset. She had never imagined that the mission would be this dangerous. Then she remembered Bai Xiaochun’s suggestion to not come to the Luochen Clan, and realized that if they had listened to him, Feng Yan might not have died.

And when she saw that Bai Xiaochun was in so much grief that he was on the verge of beating his own chest, she felt even worse. Finally, she sighed.

“Junior Brother Bai,” she said, looking at him bitterly, “let’s hurry up. If the Luochen Clan has turned traitor, they won’t want the sect getting wind of it. I just tried to send word back, but there’s interference in the area.... Transmission jade slips won’t work.”

Bai Xiaochun shivered, feeling more in danger than ever before.

## Chapter 52: Luochen Betrayal

---

Meanwhile, beneath the Luochen Clan mansion was a sprawling, underground necropolis. In one part of the necropolis was a lake of simmering blood, filled with countless floating skeletons.

The glitter of a spell formation could be seen surrounding the entire thing, and countless members of the Luochen Clan were prostrating themselves around the lake. There were men and women, youngsters and old-timers, all of whom knelt at key nexuses within the spell formation.

It was with utter solemnity that one by one, they would slice open their right hands and squeeze blood down onto the nexuses, which carried the blood into the central lake.

In the very middle of that lake of blood, an old man sat cross-legged. His hair was long and white, and he seemed threatening without being angry. With every breath he took, the lake of blood bubbled.

Suddenly, the man's eyes opened, and they gleamed with a blood-colored glow.

"What's going on!?" he demanded, his cold voice echoing throughout the necropolis.

One of the clan members closest to him was a young man, who looked exactly like the young man from up in the courtyard who had tried to kill Bai Xiaochun and the others. He leaned over and

whispered, “Patriarch, three disciples from the Spirit Stream Sect showed up. It happened so quickly that I was caught unprepared. I was worried that it would influence the larger task at hand, so my puppet body on the outside, along with the spell formation and the other puppets, tried to kill them. Unfortunately... I’m so useless, Senior. I only managed to kill one. The other two escaped, and... they took the other disciple we caught last time with them.”

The young man was feeling quite discouraged. Normally speaking, if a disciple of the Spirit Stream Sect went missing, it would take at least half a year before the sect officially declared them as missing. Only then would other disciples be sent to investigate. Considering that, by the time such disciples arrived in the Fallenstar Mountains, at least nine months should have passed.

However, only four months had gone by, and yet disciples from the Spirit Stream Sect had already arrived. It wasn’t just this young man who was taken aback. No one in the entire Luochen Clan could have guessed that the disappearance of a mere Outer Sect disciple was anything to worry about. Logically speaking, no one should have been sent to investigate so quickly.

Furthermore, if Hou Yunfei hadn’t managed to uncover the secrets of the Luochen Clan, they would never have taken him captive. According to their original plan, they needed half a year to be completely prepared, then rise up and free themselves from the control of the Spirit Stream Sect!

However, that meant they still need a month of time....

“Two Outer Sect disciples...? Hmph! The defensive spell



formation has already been activated. Seal the area and send people to track them down and kill them. We only need one more month... and then nothing will be able to stop us!” The old man didn’t seem to be worried at all about what had happened, and closed his eyes to continue meditating.

The young man sighed, bowing his head in compliance.

It didn’t take long before seven figures emerged from within the Luochen Clan. The one in the lead position was the same young man, whose cultivation base was in the eighth level of Qi Condensation.

Of the other six, the weakest were in the sixth level of Qi Condensation, with two being in the seventh.

“They won’t be able to get far. Let’s go!” The seven cultivators shot into the jungle, eyes shining with killing intent.

Out in the jungle, Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei were moving along as fast as possible while simultaneously propping up Hou Yunfei. They tried to use their Windskiff, but apparently the same interference from the spell formation that made transmission jade slips inoperable had the same effect on the ship.

The expressions on the faces of Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei grew even darker.

Bai Xiaochun’s face was pale, and the sensation of imminent

crisis within him couldn't be greater. Every inch of flesh and blood within him was screaming out at him to flee as fast as he could!

If he went any slower, he would surely die!

The sensation of danger was far greater than what he had felt from Feng Yan. After all, even though Feng Yan had tried to kill him, he had been nervous about it and tried to do it secretly.

Bai Xiaochun had known all along that as long as he was careful, he would most likely be able to avoid whatever move Feng Yan made against him, and could probably even strike back at him.

But now... the instant he thought about the information in their possession, he trembled, and sweat began to pour down his face. Considering that they knew about the Luo Chen Clan's betrayal, it was obvious that they wouldn't hesitate to kill all of them.

They would no doubt go to any and all lengths to ensure their silence.

Furthermore, they wouldn't strike out in secret, they would attack like a lightning bolt!

Nor would they allow much time for them to get very far away. In fact, there were almost certainly members of the Luo Chen Clan chasing after them already.

"Damn you, Hall of Justice. This mission... is not the type that

Outer Sect disciples can handle!!” Then Bai Xiaochun remembered that the Luo Chen Clan had a Foundation Establishment Patriarch, and he began to shake even harder.

“Foundation Establishment.... The difference between Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment is like the difference between being mortal and being in Qi Condensation....” Bai Xiaochun was so nervous that his eyes were bloodshot.

“I practice cultivation... to live forever....” Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, but no tears would come. He looked over at Hou Yunfei, and knew that he would never be able to abandon him just to gain some speed. That was something he could never bring himself to do.

Du Lingfei’s face was pale; her cultivation base was the weakest of them all, and her internal spiritual energy was recovering very slowly. The more time passed, the worse she felt about the situation.

She knew that they were facing almost certain death. Perhaps someone in the seventh level of Qi Condensation might be able to fight back against a Foundation Establishment Patriarch. But now, Feng Yan was dead, and she was only in the fifth level of Qi Condensation, with no hope of being able to break through to the next level any time soon. As for Bai Xiaochun... considering how scared he was of dying, Du Lingfei would never place any hope in him.

“I never imagined I would die on my first mission outside of the sect,” she thought, laughing bitterly. However, things weren’t

over yet, and it wasn't the time to give up, so she gritted her teeth and produced a medicinal pill from within her bag of holding and popped it into her mouth. Then she looked over at Bai Xiaochun, who was pale-faced and shivering, and she sighed. At the moment, she no longer felt any scorn for him. Producing a medicinal pill bottle, she tossed it over to him.

“Junior Brother Bai, make sure to keep your internal spiritual energy up.”

Bai Xiaochun stared in shock at the medicinal pill bottle, then opened it and consumed one of the pills. It was at this point that he suddenly remembered something, and produced two medicinal pill bottles from Feng Yan's bag of holding.

“Elder Brother Feng had some medicinal pills,” he said, handing one of the bottles to Du Lingfei.

She accepted it silently, and the two of them proceeded along as fast as possible. Before long, they were back in the location where they had discovered Hou Yunfei's jade slip. When Du Lingfei saw that tree, she sighed inwardly.

By now, it was useless to have regrets, so without another word, they continued to speed along. Gradually, Du Lingfei began to slow down, which made Bai Xiaochun even more nervous. Finally, he then grabbed her by the arm and pulled her along, carrying Hou Yunfei at the same time.

Du Lingfei had long since noticed that Bai Xiaochun was much

faster than her. When he grabbed her arm, she almost pulled away, but when she saw the look of terror on his face, she sighed and allowed him to pull her along.

It was at this point that Hou Yunfei shivered, and his eyes slowly opened. He looked exhausted.

After assessing his current position, he laughed bitterly and said, “Junior Brother Bai, I never thought that, after all these years, we would meet again like this.”

Seeing that Hou Yunfei was awake, Du Lingfei quickly offered him a medicinal pill.

Bai Xiaochun looked at Hou Yunfei and sighed. “Elder Brother Hou....”

“There’s still hope for us,” Hou Yunfei said. “For their own personal benefit, the Luo Chen Clan slaughtered people from the mortal world, extracting their blood and bones for use in a spell formation. Their Foundation Establishment Patriarch is currently presiding over the Inverse Blood Grand Magic, so he can’t personally come after us. Furthermore, the entire Luo Chen Clan is maintaining the spell formation. Therefore... they won’t be able to send very many people after us!”

Hou Yunfei smiled, took the medicinal pill from Du Lingfei, and swallowed it. Then, his eyes began to shine as he said, “Although we can’t get a message to the sect from this location, if we get far enough away, we’ll definitely be able to!”

“Something big like this, an entire cultivator clan rebelling, will definitely provoke a huge reaction from the sect!”

Thanks to the medicinal pill, he no longer needed help from Bai Xiaochun, and began to speed along on his own power.

Because of that, they managed to pick up speed. Soon, the borders of the Fallenstar Mountains became visible, and eventually, they shot out into the open, whereupon Du Lingfei pulled out a jade slip and tried to make contact with the sect. Moments later, her face drained of blood, and she shook her head.

“Still not working...?” muttered Bai Xiaochun, his heart pounding. Hou Yunfei merely stood there silently.

None of them spoke any further as they continued on dejectedly. It was at this point that, all of a sudden, a whistling sound could be heard from behind them. Their faces fell as seven figures burst out of the trees not too far away.

In the lead was the young man in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, who looked at Bai Xiaochun and the others, eyes flickering with killing intent.

“Like I said, you... can’t get away! Never forget that the person who killed you is named Chen Yue! Kill them!”

The Luo Chen Clan members immediately pulled out magical

devices, and cold light appeared in their eyes as they closed in.

The faces of Bai Xiaochun, Du Lingfei, and Hou Yunfei flickered, and they gritted their teeth as they tried to pick up speed.

Chen Yue was laughing coldly as he flicked his sleeve, causing a violet skull to appear. As it sped through the air, it cackled madly, and within the blink of an eye, it was almost directly upon Bai Xiaochun and the others. At that point, Chen Yue waved his finger, and the skull exploded.

The resulting shockwave sent the three Spirit Stream Sect disciples spinning apart. Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei suddenly lost their momentum, and were almost instantly surrounded by the Luochen Clan members.

Bai Xiaochun, however, kept speeding along. Before, he had been somewhat held back by the other two, but now that he was on his own, he burst out with incredible speed, breaking free of the Luochen Clan members. It only took a moment for him to put dozens of meters between them, and from the look of it, he was only starting to pick up speed.

Even Chen Yue, the only member of the Luochen Clan in the Eighth level of Qi Condensation, could do nothing but stare in shock.

“He’s fast,” Chen Yue said coolly. “First kill these two, then we’ll go after him!” Waving his sleeve, he turned to Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei, killing intent boiling.

Du Lingfei coughed up a mouthful of blood. Her body was already spattered in blood; she was surrounded and certain that she was going to die. As she looked at Bai Xiaochun fleeing off into the distance, she began to laugh bitterly.

She was well aware that Bai Xiaochun feared death, so although she wasn't very surprised, she couldn't help but feel bitter and hopeless.

“Junior Brother Bai, I hope you manage to get away....” she thought. At the same time, she performed an incantation gesture, sending a flying sword out with the power of Lightness-in-Heaviness. Coughing up more blood, she continued to try to defend herself.

Hou Yunfei was also laughing bitterly, but his eyes shone with a cold light. He let out a roar, and although his spiritual energy was mostly depleted, he wasn't ready to just give in. Gritting his teeth, he prepared to take some of the enemy with him as he died, if only to buy some more time for Bai Xiaochun.



# Chapter 53: Bravery!

---

Bai Xiaochun's face was pale and his heart was pounding. The sensation of danger left him so alarmed that he felt like he might die at any moment, leaving him shaking uncontrollably.

He had never been this frightened before in his entire life. Not when he had left his village to light the incense and brave the lightning, not when Li Qinghou had taken him to 10,000 Snakes Valley, not even when he had seen all those fantastic and powerful creatures while traveling.

In all those situations, he had been nervous, but he had also been confident that... he wouldn't die!

But today, he had the distinct sensation... that he was really going to die!!

As he flew along, he suddenly realized that he was alone. Then he looked back in shock to see that the seven members of the Luo Chen Clan had surrounded Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei, several hundred meters back.

He also saw that Du Lingfei was coughing up blood. Anyone in this situation would be able to tell that she and Hou Yunfei wouldn't be able to hold on for very long before they were cut down.

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun as he stood there watching. He began to shake even harder, and his eyes were completely shot

with blood. He could feel his very soul screaming at him to run away as quickly as possible.

In fact, Bai Xiaochun was quite sure that, considering the speed he could maintain, and given that Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei were preventing the enemy from giving chase, there was actually a good chance... that he could get away.

If he did, he could keep on living, he could continue to practice cultivation, and he could pursue what he really wanted: eternal life with no death. Not only would the sect not punish him if he survived, they would even reward him.

However... if he simply ran away, leaving Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei to their deaths, he would feel guilty for the rest of his life. He felt as if his entire body had been split in half, with one half telling him to flee at top speed, otherwise he would die. The other half was telling him that if he left his fellow sect members to die, that he would never be able to rest at ease for the rest of his life!

Panting, he let out a frustrated cry of anger. Blue veins popped out on his forehead, and he was shaking as hard as a tumbling die. At the moment, he wasn't thinking much about the specifics of the situation, or the potential consequences. His hands clenched into fists as a single thought ran through his head....

“I, Bai Xiaochun, might be afraid of dying, but... I'm not gonna just run away!” He suddenly began to beat at his chest with his fists. His eyes were completely bloodshot, and he let out a thunderous roar as he suddenly... shot back toward Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei!

He moved so quickly that whistling sounds echoed out in all directions. Hou Yunfei trembled at the sight of Bai Xiaochun's sudden reversal in course, and his expression was hard to read. He looked astonished, thankful, and all of a sudden, he started laughing. Then, determination glimmered in his eyes, and without even thinking about defense, he charged toward the Luo Chen Clan members with everything he had.

Simultaneously, Du Lingfei, whose body was splattered with blood from where a flying sword had slashed across her, looked up to see Bai Xiaochun, eyes bloodshot, roaring as he charged in their direction.

She felt as if she had been struck by lightning, and her jaw dropped. Tears began to roll down her cheeks as numerous emotions flooded through her. She was touched, excited, and shaken.

She knew how much Bai Xiaochun was afraid of dying, so when she saw him flying toward them, physically trembling, eyes crimson, she could only imagine how much bravery he had summoned... to stop running away, turn around, and then come back for them.

“Get out of here, you idiot! Run! Don't get yourself killed!!” Tears streamed down her face. As Bai Xiaochun ran toward them bellowing at the top of his lungs, she didn't notice that one of the Luo Chen Clan disciples in the sixth level of Qi Condensation was unleashing a palm strike toward her back.

A boom rang out, and blood sprayed out of her mouth. Her vision swam as she tumbled to the ground. Then, one of the Luo Chen Clan cultivators' flying swords began to speed through the air toward her head.

When Bai Xiaochun saw what was happening, he let out an even more violent roar, and pushed forward with another burst of speed, reaching his very limit. He streaked through the air, turning into a beam of light that shot toward Du Lingfei. Even as the flying sword bore down on her, Bai Xiaochun landed at her side, scooped her up with one arm, then clenched his right hand into a fist and punched out toward the flying sword.

A boom echoed out as the flying sword was sent spinning away by the force of Bai Xiaochun's blow.

The Luo Chen Clan members were all greatly shocked. Chen Yue's eyes flickered with surprise, but then quickly began to radiate icy killing intent.

"Nice. An expert in disguise. I should have noticed you back when you were in the Shadowhell Formation! Listen up everyone, ignore the other two and kill this guy!" As soon as the words left his mouth, murderous looks appeared in the eyes of the other Luo Chen Clan members, and they began to close in on Bai Xiaochun.

Du Lingfei was in a bit of a daze as Bai Xiaochun held her in his arms. Before she could do anything, he put her down off to the side and then shot toward the incoming Luo Chen Clan cultivators.

His eyes were bright red, and it almost seemed that as of this moment, he wasn't thinking about dying at all. In fact, he wasn't thinking about anything except: Save Hou Yunfei. Save Du Lingfei. And kill all the enemies!

The nearest of those opponents was in the sixth level of Qi Condensation, and as he closed in, his hands flickered in an incantation gesture. In response, a glowing awl suddenly appeared, which shot viciously toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Screw off!” Bai Xiaochun roared, unleashing a ferocious palm strike. The little awl began to wobble, and when Bai Xiaochun's palm slammed into it, the glowing light shattered, and the awl was sent spinning away.

The cultivator who had summoned the awl gasped, and an expression of shock flickered across his face. Just when he was about to fall back in retreat, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture and pointed out. His wooden sword appeared and shot out like lightning. It didn't matter that his opponent was in the sixth level of Qi Condensation; he was incapable of evading, and in fact, didn't even have time to react before the sword stabbed into his forehead.

A miserable shriek echoed out as the wooden sword stabbed all the way through him, coming out the other side in a spray of blood. Then, it circled through the air and headed toward the next enemy.

At the same time, one of the Luo Chen Clan members in the seventh level of Qi Condensation performed an incantation gesture, causing mist to roil up around him, making him look like an enormous mist giant. Even as he closed in, Bai Xiaochun's hand suddenly shot out, and his thumb and index fingers connected. Black light flickered, and the defenses provided by the mist could do nothing to stop the black light.

Throat Crushing Grasp!

Cracking sounds rang out as the mist dissipated. The cultivator's eyes went wide at the sight of the arm grabbing his neck. Then, his throat was completely crushed.

Everything happened with incredible speed. Only a few breaths of time had passed since Bai Xiaochun had begun his charge, and already, two members of the Luo Chen Clan had been killed!

Hou Yunfei, who had already fallen back to stand at Du Lingfei's side, gasped, and his eyes went wide with shock.

Du Lingfei was completely and utterly taken aback. The Bai Xiaochun she was seeing right now was completely different from the one she remembered, causing her to pant in disbelief. Was this really the same Bai Xiaochun who was so afraid of dying?

At this point, the remaining shocked members of the Luo Chen Clan finally unleashed their killing moves. These were their most powerful trump cards, one being a flying sword, another a pearl, and the last, a little cauldron, all of which shot toward Bai

Xiaochun.

Astonishingly, the three of them were joining forces to attack simultaneously!

Of that group of three, two were in the sixth level of Qi Condensation, and one was in the seventh. Their combined attack was completely vicious as they went all out with everything they had to try to strike down Bai Xiaochun when he couldn't dodge.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were glowing red as the three closed in on him. Even as their magical devices bore down on him, he curled his arms and legs up until he looked like a ball. Previously, Du Lingfei had mocked the big black wok he wore on his back, but now, it covered him up completely.

The little cauldron which had been unleashed by the cultivator in the seventh level of Qi Condensation slammed into the black wok, causing a boom to echo out that could shake Heaven and Earth. Cracks spread out across the wok, but it held strong against the cauldron.

Next was the pearl. Rumbling sounds echoed out as it slammed into the wok. The wok couldn't hold up any longer, and exploded, transforming into countless black fragments that showered out in all directions. Bai Xiaochun shot out from the wreckage, flying toward the Qi Condensation seventh level cultivator.

When the man saw Bai Xiaochun flying toward him, his face fell. He immediately fell back, but couldn't move fast enough.

None of the magical protective items the man had could do anything to stop Bai Xiaochun, who slammed into him, causing the cracking sounds of breaking bones to ring out. Instantly, Bai Xiaochun went in for another attack, butting him with his head.

BOOOMMMM!

“No!!” screamed the man. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and a look of despair filled his eyes, but he couldn’t break free from Bai Xiaochun.

Off to the side, his fellow clan members in the sixth level of Qi Condensation were nearly scared out of their minds. Trembling, one of them sent a flying sword toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun completely ignored it as he once again lunged toward the middle-aged man.

The flying sword slammed into Bai Xiaochun, and in a completely shocking twist, it didn’t stab into him, but rather, bounced off and was sent spinning away.

Bai Xiaochun let out a roar, striking the middle-aged man once more. A bloodcurdling scream echoed out as the man died.

To the other two clan members in the sixth level of Qi Condensation, Bai Xiaochun, with his bloodshot eyes and disheveled hair, looked like a wild beast. Their scalps began to



tingle as he slowly turned to look at them. Without the slightest hesitation, they turned and fled.

Off in the distance, Chen Yue was completely shaken by what had just occurred, and he could scarcely even believe what he had just witnessed.

## Chapter 54: Principles!

---

Seeing that the two cultivators in the sixth level of Qi Condensation were fleeing, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture, then waved his finger. His little wooden sword instantly flew through the air, slashing across the neck of one of the cultivators.

His companion's eyes instantly shone with an unprecedented level of astonishment and terror.

They were the ones who were supposed to be doing the chasing and killing, but now... the tables had turned, and they were being cut down!

In a few short moments, Bai Xiaochun had already killed four people!

The remaining cultivator in the sixth level of Qi condensation had an ashen face as he went all out to try to escape. His heart was pounding, and he was trembling all over. How could he ever have imagined that the slender, pure and fair Spirit Stream Sect disciple could... be so utterly terrifying?

Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with a savage gleam, and he was just about to give chase when, all of a sudden, a sensation of danger welled up in his heart.

At the same time, Du Lingfei cried out urgently, "Watch out!"

Bai Xiaochun immediately leaped backward. In almost the exact same instant, a three-meter tall violet skull shot into the area where he had just been standing, then exploded.

A boom rang out as the power of explosion blasted out, slamming into Bai Xiaochun. For the first time, his Undying Iron Skin felt pain, and blood even oozed out of his mouth as he flew backward.

The person to attack him had been none other than Chen Yue, who was in the eighth level of Qi condensation.

His expression was unsightly, and a very serious look could be seen in his eyes. After saving his fellow clan member from danger, he flashed through the air toward Bai Xiaochun. Behind him were two other cultivators, who were in the sixth level of Qi Condensation. They gritted their teeth and followed along.

Three people were now charging toward Bai Xiaochun.

Hou Yunfei wanted to help, but was simply too weak. The attack he had made earlier drained him of the last scrap of spiritual energy he had, and blood was currently seeping out of the corners of his mouth. Unfortunately, he was in no state to fight.

Du Lingfei had been seriously injured, and as she anxiously watched Bai Xiaochun fighting, she realized that all of the previous hostility and prejudice she had felt toward him were long gone.

Bai Xiaochun's face was ashen as more blood oozed out of his mouth. He appeared to be on the verge of collapsing, and had seemingly lost much of the speed he had been capable of earlier. Seeing that, Chen Yue and his companions closed in for the kill.

However, as they closed in, a brutal gleam appeared in Bai Xiaochun's eyes. While it was true that his Undying Iron Skin couldn't completely block Chen Yue's attack moments ago, the truth was that it had absorbed the majority of the force of the attack. His current weak state, and even the blood oozing out of his mouth, were all an act.

In the blink of an eye, he redoubled his speed. Furthermore, instead of retreating, he switched directions, passing Chen Yue toward his true target... the two Luochen clan members in the sixth level of Qi Condensation.

Chen Yue's face flickered, and even as he made to block Bai Xiaochun's path, Bai Xiaochun's wooden sword shot toward him. Chen Yue performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, summoning the same skull from earlier. Rumbling sounds echoed out, but Chen Yue was incapable of stopping Bai Xiaochun.

A fierce gleam appeared in Chen Yue's eyes, and he waved his sleeve, causing a lantern to materialize, which expanded out in a fireball that sped toward Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, the two weaker cultivators were crying out in shock and falling back in retreat. However, Bai Xiaochun moved as fast as lightning, and was almost instantly upon one of them, whereupon he reached out with his thumb and index finger,

causing a flickering black glow to appear as he pinched his fingers together.

### Throat Crushing Grasp!

The nearest Luochen Clan cultivator screamed, and then a cracking sound echoed out as his neck was crushed. At the same time, the blisteringly hot fireball was closing in on Bai Xiaochun from behind, and there was clearly no time for him to jump out of the way. Instantly, it slammed into him.

A sea of flames exploded out, surrounding Bai Xiaochun, and causing both Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei to shout out in alarm: “Bai Xiaochun!!”

Further off, the surviving cultivator among the duo seemed delighted at the sight of Bai Xiaochun being consumed by the fire, and even started laughing.

But then something barreled out from within the sea of flames to appear directly in front of that laughing cultivator. His eyes went wide, and before he could even retreat, Bai Xiaochun kicked down viciously, crushing the man’s head into his torso. He didn’t even have a chance to scream before he was completely dead.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was panting, and his eyes were even more shot with blood than before. Wounds riddled his body, and blood was oozing out of his mouth as he slowly looked up to glare at the last member of the Luochen Clan... Chen Yue!

Being stared at in such a way caused Chen Yue's heart to prickle. His cultivation base was in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and he could be considered one of the Chosen in his clan. Although he didn't quite have the status of Crown Prince, he had the approval of the Patriarch and had experienced numerous deadly battles with beasts in the Fallenstar Mountains. Such deadly tempering had given him extraordinary battle prowess.

As such, he completely looked down upon disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect. Although they far exceed him in terms of status, to him, cultivators from the big sects were like flowers in a flowerpot. Although they had extraordinary divine abilities, when it came to battles of life and death, they couldn't possibly match up to him.

And yet now, Bai Xiaochun caused terror to well up inside of him. In fact, the moment that Bai Xiaochun's eyes locked onto him, he felt more frightened than any time he had encountered a wild beast in the Fallenstar Mountains.

That gaze contained a ferocity that seemed to wish to consume him alive, and caused coldness to spread out in Chen Yue's heart.

When he thought about the fact that this person had slaughtered six of his fellow clan members in quick succession, he was completely and utterly shaken. In fact, what was most unbelievable of all was that this person's cultivation base... was merely in the great circle of the sixth level of Qi Condensation.

"He's way too powerful and fast! He obviously cultivates some sort of body refinement magic, and has cultivated it to the level that he can kill people in one blow!

“Furthermore, his defenses are terrifying!

“He doesn’t have any magical techniques, but his control over his flying sword is incredible. The sword not only moves with unimaginable speed, it’s backed with astonishing power. And that wooden sword is definitely no ordinary item. It’s obviously something so incredible it can kill someone in the sixth level of Qi Condensation!

“This guy must be a famous Chosen from the Spirit Stream Sect. How come I’ve never heard his name before? Bai Xiaochun!” In his shock, Chen Yue felt a desire to fight burning within him. He waved his hand, causing three fist-sized jade skulls to fly out.

His expression was very serious as he looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

“I underestimated you, but that’s not going to happen again. Let’s see which is more powerful, the magical techniques of your Spirit Stream Sect, or the killer ghouls of my Luochen Clan!”

Even as his words continued to echo out, Chen Yue performed an incantation gesture, causing the three skulls to suddenly begin to scream in very lifelike fashion. They also rapidly grew larger, until each one was fully three meters tall. Then, they all shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s breath came in ragged pants. His mind was a blank, devoid of any thinking. He had forgotten about the

possibility of dying, and the only thing he had was the impulse to cut down his opponent.

As the skulls closed in on him, he quickly performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, then waved his finger, sending his little wooden sword screaming out, to be joined by two other ordinary flying swords. Instantly, massive amounts of sword light filled the area as Bai Xiaochun began his charge.

There was also a little shield which appeared and began to fly around him, radiating magical light.

A moment later, Bai Xiaochun and his flying swords slammed into the skulls, causing massive rumbling sounds to echo out. Instantly, fierce fighting broke out between Bai Xiaochun and Chen Yue.

Chen Yue was in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, with a cultivation base much more profound than Bai Xiaochun's. However, in terms of power and defense, as the two fought, it became obvious that they were about even.

Waves of shock battered Du Lingfei's heart. She was so nervous that her hands were clenched into fists, and her fingernails dug painfully into her palms.

The annoying Bai Xiaochun she remembered from the competition was nowhere to be seen. He had been replaced by someone with veins of steel, someone who was able to fight with Chen Yue of the Luochen Clan!



“I misjudged him.... This is the real Bai Xiaochun....

“He really is afraid of dying, but to come back and fight to the death like he has done takes far more courage than that possessed by most ordinary people....” As she looked at Bai Xiaochun, Du Lingfei’s eyes glowed with increased vigor.

“Even though he fears death, his heart is strong, and he has principles. Even if he is afraid of getting killed, he won’t give up on his companions....”

Ear-splitting booms rang out constantly. Before long, Bai Xiaochun’s two ordinary flying swords were destroyed. Only his wooden sword remained. However, the three skulls were much dimmer than before, and were clearly significantly damaged as they flew back to Chen Yue.

Bai Xiaochun took advantage of the opportunity that provided to launch another attack. Blood sprayed out of Chen Yue’s mouth as Bai Xiaochun’s Throat Crushing Grasp latched onto his arm. Cracking sounds rang out as the bones were shattered. However, Chen Yue still managed to spit a tiny sword out of his mouth, which shot toward Bai Xiaochun and stabbed a full inch into his shoulder!

Not even the Undying Iron Skin could stop it, and blood immediately began to flow. Chen Yue instantly shot backward, but before he could get very far, Bai Xiaochun, eyes bloodshot and completely disregarding his own injuries, gave chase at top speed.

Chen Yue's face looked extremely unsightly as he clenched his jaw in the face of the deadly situation that was developing. He quickly performed an incantation gesture and then tapped his forehead, causing his entire body to tremble. Even as all of the qi and blood in his body began to surge violently, he slapped his hand down onto the crown of his head.

“Bai Xiaochun, someone is going to die today, and it will be either me or you!” On any other occasion, Chen Yue would have already ceased fighting. But this was a critical moment for his clan, and he knew that he had to kill Bai Xiaochun. He quickly spit out some of his life blood, which was voraciously consumed by the three skulls.

“Ghoul Bloodbath!” he howled as he unleashed his secret magic. The three skulls' eyes began to glow with mysterious light as they shot toward Chen Yue and began to madly chew away at his flesh and blood as they tried to burrow into his body.

The bizarre sight caused Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei to gasp. Simultaneously, Chen Yue let out a miserable howl. His entire body was shaking, and his expression was completely vicious as a black fog roiled out from inside of him, transforming him into a three-meter-tall ghoul!

“Die!” he roared, shoving his hand out as he shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

“You'll be the one to die!” Bai Xiaochun howled. His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture, and then he

pointed up into the air. Spiritual energy roiled madly out of him, shooting up into the air to form the shocking image of a cauldron!

This was none other than...

Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning!

## Chapter 55: Crown Prince Chen Heng!

---

“Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning!?” Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei were both shocked, and expressions of intense astonishment appeared on their faces.

That was especially true of Du Lingfei. Having mastered the art of Lightness-in-Heaviness, she knew how difficult Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning was, and that on all of the south bank, only a few people could do it.

Rumbling echoed out as the huge cauldron slammed into the ghou. The ground quaked as it screamed and collapsed into numerous strands of black fog that roiled out in all directions, revealing Chen Yue.

Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he slammed down onto the ground. Looking up bitterly at the huge cauldron, he murmured, “Violet Qi... Cauldron Summoning....”

With that, he struggled to turn his head to look one more time at Bai Xiaochun before passing away into death. The secret magic he had unleashed inflicted serious damage on his internal organs. That, coupled with a blow from the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning that destroyed even the ghou, ensured that he had no hope of surviving.

Even as he died, his eyes were still staring at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the dead Chen Yue, and then suddenly

sagged in place. His internal spiritual energy had been vastly depleted, leaving him dizzy and as weak as a deflated balloon. He stood there, shivering, swaying back and forth, his face pale. He almost didn't dare to believe that he had actually killed all these people.

As he thought back to the events which had just played out, he suddenly noticed a sweet taste, which was the blood oozing out of his mouth.

"I'm bleeding..." he thought. "I... I almost got killed!!" Everywhere hurt, especially his shoulder. There were also numerous burns all over his body, which pulsed with pain. As Bai Xiaochun thought back to the fight, fear welled up within him, and he trembled.

"Why... why did I come back? That... was so dangerous. I might have lost my little life.... I, Bai Xiaochun, am always careful in everything I do. How could I have been so impulsive...?" Just as post-traumatic stress was about to hurl him into regret, something extremely soft and yet simultaneously firm leapt into his arms. He could feel curves, and could smell a delicate fragrance. It was none other than Du Lingfei.

At first, he was surprised, but his expression quickly turned serious. Holding Du Lingfei tight, he calmly said, "Elder Sister Du, fear not. With Bai Xiaochun here, no one will be able to harm a hair on your head!"

Even as he spoke, his hand suddenly found itself resting on a soft, curved surface....

“Thank you, thank you....” she gushed emotionally, tears streaming down her face. It took her a moment to realize that somehow she was in Bai Xiaochun’s arms. And then she realized what his hands were doing behind her, and her face reddened. She quickly backed up and looked at him angrily.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, savoring the sensation he had just experienced, and mused that Du Lingfei definitely deserved to be known as one of the top beauties on the south bank.

A strange expression could be seen on Hou Yunfei’s face. Clearing his throat, he smiled at Bai Xiaochun. “Junior Brother Bai, we’ll have time later to think about everything that has happened here. The Luo Chen Clan is definitely going to send more people to kill us, and this time it will most likely be the most powerful experts they have under the level of Foundation Establishment. We need to get out of here as quickly as possible.”

Bai Xiaochun shivered. He had just used every trick he had at his disposal to beat these people. The mere thought of anyone showing up who was more powerful than Chen Yue caused Bai Xiaochun’s face to grow pale. Looking at the chaos around him, he instantly nodded.

“Yeah. Yeah, you’re right, let’s get out of here, as quickly as possible!” With that, he instantly began to run away. He cut a very different image than the vicious fighter with veins of steel. However, this time, Du Lingfei didn’t find it annoying, but actually rather charming. As she followed along, she thought back to the vicious fight he had gone through to rescue her, and the glow in

her eyes grew stronger.

Hou Yunfei shook his head. Quickly gathering up the Luo Chen Clan members' bags of holding, he caught up with Bai Xiaochun and handed them over.

“Junior Brother Bai, these are your spoils of war.”

Bai Xiaochun threw them into his robe without even looking at them. As of this point, he couldn't stop shaking, and could only think of one thing: fleeing.

---

A short time ago....

Back in the Fallenstar Mountains, in the Luo Chen Clan's necropolis, the lake of blood was surrounded by the various nodes that formed the spell formation. When the first Luo Chen Clan member fell to Bai Xiaochun's hand, one of those nodes collapsed, and the blood inside dried up.

This scene caused the Luo Chen Clan members to stare in shock. However, before any of them could react, the same thing happened to a second node, then a third, a fourth and a fifth....

Rumbling sounds echoed out continuously.

The Luo Chen Clan was completely in shock, and one face after

another fell. Then, the Patriarch in the middle of the lake of blood slowly opened his eyes.

In that exact moment, a boom rang out from the node which Chen Yue had recently occupied.

“I can’t believe that Chen Yue... was just killed!”

“They’re all dead. All seven people who were sent out have been killed!”

“How is this even possible? Weren’t they going after two lowly Outer Sect disciples? Could it be that the Spirit Stream Sect knows about us, and sent a Foundation Establishment cultivator?!” The Luo Chen Clan members couldn’t suppress their shock, and a huge commotion instantly broke out, along with looks of fear and terror.

“Pipe down!” said an icy voice, which cut through all of the clamor. It was none other than the Foundation Establishment Patriarch. His voice echoed out like a thunderclap, causing the rest of the clan members to tremble and look nervously over at him.

“The Heaven-defying chance to change our destiny, to expel the seal from within our blood, is a chance we will only come across once in a thousand years,” he said slowly. “Since the decision has been made, there is no need to let our imaginations run wild. If a Foundation Establishment cultivator had set foot into the security spell formation I have set up, I would have detected it. As of this moment... no Foundation Establishment cultivator has come, nor



have any words been sent back. What are you people getting flustered for?” An unsightly expression could be seen on his face; were it not for the fact that he had to maintain the spell formation, he would have personally gone out to wipe out Bai Xiaochun and the others.

However, if he left, the Inverse Blood spell formation, which was the only way their clan could break free from the Spirit Stream Sect, would unleash a powerful backlash. Although he might be able to survive, the rest of the clan would find their blood flowing in reverse, and would die.

“It wouldn’t necessarily take a Foundation Establishment cultivator to kill Chen Yue and his group. Those two Outer Sect disciples were either concealing the level of their cultivation bases, or have some sort of rare magical items!

“Even if they were concealing their cultivation bases, at the most, they might be at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. As for magical items... the more powerful they are, the harder they will be for Qi Condensation cultivators to use.

“Heng’er!” The old man’s eyes glittered brightly as he slapped his hand down onto the surface of the lake of blood. Immediately, the blood began to ripple as a young man rose up from within, clad in a blood-red robe.

He was exceedingly handsome, with chiseled features, and as soon as he opened his eyes, they glowed with the color of blood. Even as his energy surged up, nine blood-colored ghouls appeared around him, which emitted soundless howls.

When the surrounding members of the Luochen Clan saw the young man, excited expressions could be seen on their faces, and they clasped hands and bowed their heads.

When the Patriarch looked at the young man, his eyes gleamed with kindness and praise. His voice was soft as he said, “Heng’er, you are the Crown Prince of the Luochen Clan, and with a cultivation base of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, you are our most powerful expert next to me.... You are well-qualified to handle this task. Take nine people with you... and kill all of the Outer Sect disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect!”

The young man nodded, then coldly responded, “I won’t return until they’re dead.”

He leapt up, and the nine blood-colored ghouls transformed into a blood mist that lifted him up into the air. One by one, he nodded at nine other clan members, after which the ten of them left.

Soon, ten figures were speeding out of the Luochen Clan mansion. The young man named Chen Heng then waved his hand, causing blood mists to appear beneath all of their feet, after which they flew off at top speed.

They moved with incredible speed as they used a clan blood tracking technique to head toward the area where Chen Yue and the others had been killed.

Chen Heng was in the ninth level of Qi Condensation. As for the

rest of the group, five were in the same level as Chen Yue had been, the eighth level of Qi Condensation. The rest were in the seventh level.

A squad like this was the most powerful force that the Luo Chen Clan could afford to send out at the moment.

After enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, Chen Heng and his group burst out of the jungle of the Fallenstar Mountains to appear in the location where Chen Yue and his group of seven had died.

The shocking sight of all the corpses caused the faces of the other nine clan members to flicker.

However, Chen Heng looked coldly at the corpses, and especially at those whose necks had been crushed, and his eyes began to shine with a mysterious light.

“A body refinement cultivator!”

He suddenly flickered through the air to appear next to Chen Yue’s corpse. After studying it thoughtfully for a few breaths of time, he reached down, pushed his hand onto the ground and closed his eyes. After a moment, his eyes opened.

“Interesting. I can sense the lingering fluctuations of Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning....

“That means he simultaneously cultivates both magic and his body. With such shocking fleshly body power, and an impressive magical technique, it’s no wonder he cut down Chen Yue and the others.

“He must be one of the Chosen of the Spirit Stream Sect. Shangguan Tianyou perhaps? Or is he Lu Tianlei?” A brutal gleam rose up in Chen Heng’s eyes, within which flickered a deep desire to do battle.

“All of you pick a different direction to search in,” he said, his voice as cold as ice. “Once you track them down, send me a message immediately!” With that, the others nodded in affirmation and then scattered in different directions.

With a cold snort, Chen Heng picked a direction to begin searching, and flew off. “The security spell formation is vast. You won’t be able to leave it for the next half month. You people... are dead!”

# Chapter 56: Sticking Together For Survival

---

At dusk on the following day, Bai Xiaochun and the others were still speeding along. Occasionally, they would make attempts to use their transmission jade slips, but never succeeded in making contact with the sect.

Thankfully, they had plenty of medicinal pills. The seven Luochen Clan cultivators Bai Xiaochun had killed had all had bags of holding. Although the resources inside weren't at quite the same level as what was available in the Spirit Stream Sect, at a time like this, it was more than sufficient.

With medicinal pills to bolster them, Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei were in high spirits. With their injuries under control, they managed to continue on through the entire night.

Bai Xiaochun trembled in fear the entire time. The slightest breeze or rustling leaf would cause sweat to break out on his forehead. His heart felt tight, and his eyes were completely bloodshot. He was also still sore from the fighting, which often left him gritting his teeth from the pain.

It wasn't that the pain was unendurable. Actually, it didn't measure up at all to the pain he had felt while cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique. What bothered him was the actual sight of the blood and wounds, and the fear that they might worsen and eventually become life-threatening. He couldn't help but grimace in anxiety at the thought of it.

Back before all of this had started, Du Lingfei would definitely have mocked him for that, and thought less of him than before. But now, everything was different, and a warm look could be seen in her eyes as she continuously comforted him.

“It’s okay. Don’t be scared, Junior Brother Bai. This wound looks bad, but it’s not life-threatening.

“Don’t move, I’ll put some more medicinal ointment on it....”

Seeing Bai Xiaochun wince in pain despite the critical danger they were in caused Du Lingfei to secretly smile. Within that smile were numerous undefinable emotions.

She knew how much Bai Xiaochun feared death, and it was that knowledge that left her so moved and shaken that he had returned. In fact, she even felt as if there were a superlative bravery lurking somewhere inside of him.

That bravery could give birth to a figure with veins of steel, which was something she would never be able to forget.

With Du Lingfei constantly comforting him, Bai Xiaochun started to feel more and more pleased with himself, and was starting to get the feeling that taking such a deadly risk had definitely been the right thing to do. After all, it had resulted in the beautiful Du Lingfei treating him so warmly all of a sudden.

When Hou Yunfei saw what was happening, he looked on with

smiling eyes. Considering that they were all fleeing for their lives together, it was only natural that warm feelings would develop between all of them, and that they would become closer.

“Junior Brother Bai, Junior Sister Du,” he said, his tone serious, “if we can make it back to the sect alive, then I’ll remember this kindness you’ve shown me, for the rest of my life!”

“If we can make it back...?” A look of longing appeared in Du Lingfei’s eyes, but she quickly sighed and looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Pain rose up in her heart as she realized that the chances of the three of them getting back alive... were miniscule.

Bai Xiaochun sank further into silence.

Time passed. Two days went by, during which the three of them continued along with almost no rest. Repeated attempts to use their jade slips all ended in failure.

Hou Yunfei’s injuries were becoming more serious, as were Du Lingfei’s, whose face was becoming more and more ashen. Gradually, even their mental faculties were degrading.

Hou Yunfei sighed, turned to Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei and said, “It’s too bad we can’t just hide somewhere and weather the storm, but we really need to get word back to the sect. Of course, if my calculations are correct, the Luo Chen Clan’s ceremony will be ending soon, and once that happens.... their Foundation Establishment expert will be coming after us. No matter how we try to hide from him, we would be killed beyond the shadow of a

doubt.”

It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun’s face suddenly flickered. Grabbing Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei, he leaped into a nearby ditch and squatted down.

Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei both had very serious expressions on their faces, and they immediately ceased any chatter.

Before much time had passed, a beam of light appeared in the air up above, which was actually a blood mist. Within the mist was a Luochen Clan member in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, who was looking around carefully in all directions. However, because Bai Xiaochun had led the group into hiding, they weren’t noticed, and the Luochen Clan member proceeded along into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding as he watched the cultivator disappearing. His eyes were completely bloodshot, and he almost wanted to jump out and attack the man. However, he couldn’t do that unless he was certain that he could kill him. Otherwise, other members of the Luochen Clan might show up.

“They’ve caught up....” said Du Lingfei, sighing. She looked over at Bai Xiaochun and hesitated, as if there were something she wanted to say to him. However, before she could, he grabbed her hand and started running again.

The three of them said nothing as they proceeded along. They felt as if everything were weighing down on them, crushing down onto their hearts. The shadow of death loomed over them larger



than ever, threatening to consume them completely.

“There’s still hope!” Hou Yunfei suddenly said. “Although the Patriarch of the Luochen Clan is a Foundation Establishment cultivator, far beyond us in terms of cultivation, his spell formation has to have limits. The Patriarch of my Hou Clan is also a Foundation Establishment cultivator, and I was once lucky enough to see a security spell formation that he set up. It could cover a distance of 5,000 kilometers, and required sealing certain spell nodes ahead of time.”

Du Lingfei’s eyes gleamed as she responded, “Elder Brother Hou, do you mean that even though the spell formation was set up ahead of time by the Luochen Clan Patriarch, even if it exceeds 5,000 kilometers, it won’t be by much?!”

“Exactly!” Hou Yunfei declared. “Therefore, the further away we get from the Luochen Clan, the greater the chances that our jade slips will work. If we can just get word back to the sect, they’ll definitely send someone to save us!”

“5,000 kilometers,” Bai Xiaochun muttered, gritting his teeth. “At our current speed, that will take eight or nine more days to reach the border....”

As they proceeded along, they were forced to hide on numerous occasions when Luochen Clan members neared. However, each time, Bai Xiaochun’s uncanny ability to sense danger kept them safe.

Considering how on guard he was, and the fact that he was pulling Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei along with him as they fled, Bai Xiaochun was getting more and more exhausted, his face more and more ashen.

Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei's injuries continued to worsen, and as a result, their speed suffered. It eventually reached the point where Bai Xiaochun was virtually carrying both of them.

Bai Xiaochun was more cautious than ever as he led them along for three days straight.

Three days of running and hiding left Bai Xiaochun more and more drained. His face was gaunt as he led the group into a valley. However, after taking only a few steps inside, his face flickered, and he pulled Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei off to the side, where they hid behind a boulder. Unfortunately, they were a bit too slow, and moments later they could hear the sound of someone whistling through the air toward them.

A beam of white light descended from midair, slamming down into the rock they were hiding behind, completely shattering it. Hou Yunfei coughed up a mouthful of blood, and Du Lingfei couldn't prevent blood from oozing out of the corners of her mouth. A cold snort rang out through the air.

"So, here's where you've been hiding!"

A Luo Chen Clan cultivator appeared, standing on a blood mist. He was in the seventh level of Qi Condensation, and held a mirror

in his left hand. As soon as he saw them, he slapped his bag of holding and produced a jade slip. Just when he was about to transmit some information, Hou Yunfei cried out, “Don’t let him make contact!”

The ashen-faced Du Lingfei was just about to unleash a flying sword when Bai Xiaochun, who had been slowly backing up, gritted his teeth and stopped in place. Eyes bloodshot, knees quivering, he focused his qi and blood, and then the ground beneath his feet shattered as he launched himself into the air, turning into a beam of light.

Even as the Luochen Clan cultivator was about to transmit the information, Bai Xiaochun burst toward him with incredible speed. The cultivator’s face fell, and he fell back, unable to successfully make contact. Performing an incantation gesture, he swung the mirror with his left hand, causing a beam of light to shoot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered with a ferocious light; instead of dodging, he allowed the white light to slam into him. His charge carried him forward toward the shocked Luochen Clan cultivator, whereupon he reached out with his right hand, touching his thumb and index finger together. A black light shot out and latched onto the cultivator’s throat.

**Throat Crushing Grasp!**

A cracking sound rang out, and the cultivator’s eyes went wide. Blood oozed out of his mouth, and he toppled over dead, the message to his fellow clan members unsent.

Blood was also oozing out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he collected up the enemy's bag of holding, then walked back over to Du Lingfei. There, he trembled and almost fell to the ground, but gritted his teeth and managed to stay on his feet.

"Let's go!" he said, pulling Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei along.

"Let go of me!" Hou Yunfei said. "You two go. Without me, you'll be a bit faster."

His gaze was one of determination as he looked at Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei.

Du Lingfei looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun, and suddenly said something she had been contemplating saying for the past few days. "Junior Brother Bai, why don't you go alone...?"

"Shut up!" Bai Xiaochun yelled. "I'm scared of dying, but I'm risking my life. There's no way you two are going to make that sacrifice mean nothing! Come, let's go! Together!" Not giving them any chance to speak further, he pulled the two of them along. Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei didn't say anything further, but they were more moved than ever.

Bai Xiaochun was extremely cautious as he led them forward, constantly changing directions, and being careful to avoid the Luochen Clan cultivators when they got close. Three more days passed. It was evening, and the occasional bolt of lightning danced across the sky. Black clouds were forming, and rain began to fall,

great bead-sized drops that caused splashing sounds to fill the air.

It started to get very cold, causing Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei to shiver; their faces were only getting more ashen. Nervousness clutched at Bai Xiaochun's heart. Knowing that the other two wouldn't be able to survive in such bitter cold, he found a cave in a mountain, where he started a fire.

After sealing the entrance of the cave to make sure the light of the fire didn't seep out, he sat down cross-legged across from Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei.

The fire hissed and popped, and let off enough heat to gradually dispel the cold. A bit of color gradually returned to the faces of Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei, although they still looked very pale.

The three of them sat silently in the cave, watching the fire, and stewing in anxiety.

Finally, Bai Xiaochun chuckled and broke the silence, "In three more days, we should be able to pass that 5,000 kilometer mark. Hahaha! Just wait until we get back to the sect. This is definitely going to count as a big meritorious service. I wonder what reward we'll get?"

Du Lingfei looked at him, her gaze soft.

Hou Yunfei was about to laugh, but as soon as he opened his mouth, he coughed up some blood, and his face paled as he swayed

on the verge of collapse.

After all the days of running, they had long since run out of medicinal pills.

Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet and was just about to go over and examine Hou Yunfei, when suddenly his face flickered. He waved his sleeve out to protect his two friends as the stone he had rolled into place to block the firelight suddenly exploded!

# Chapter 57: You Have To Stay Alive!

---

A huge boom echoed out as the rock shattered. As Bai Xiaochun waved the shrapnel aside, cold air came rushing in. The fire danced, its flickering light revealing a tall, sturdily built man standing outside.

He was muscular, with icy eyes, and a long spear in hand. He was in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and seemed to be even stronger than Chen Yue had been.

“The Crown Prince was dead on,” he said. “With rain like this and injuries like yours, you couldn’t handle the cold, and were forced to find a place like this to hide. I had to search over a hundred mountains before I found you, but here you are.”

Even as the words were still leaving the man’s mouth, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes blazed with ferocity as he leaped into action. Although the burly man seemed like the impulsive type, he was actually quite cautious. Instead of charging into the cave to fight, he actually fell back.

In the blink of an eye, Bai Xiaochun was out of the cave and in the pouring rain.

Clearly, the burly man didn’t intend to actually fight, and was focused completely on defense. That caused Bai Xiaochun’s heart to begin to thump. He was getting a very bad feeling, and yet he gritted his teeth and ignored any possibility of injury as he charged forward in a mad attack.

A gust of frigid wind blew into the cave, extinguishing the fire. Hou Yunfei tried to struggle to his feet, but then coughed up another mouthful of blood. Du Lingfei gritted her teeth and hobbled to the mouth of the cave, where she performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, sending a flying sword shooting toward the burly man.

A moment later, a bloodcurdling scream echoed out into the stormy night. The burly man had been stabbed through the chest by a wooden sword, and yet, in the moment before dying, he hurled his spear out, which partially stabbed into Bai Xiaochun's right thigh.

The burly man glared at Bai Xiaochun. Groaning, he said, "You won't get away! The Crown Prince will be here soon!"

Then he coughed up a mouthful of blood, and his head slumped over in death.

Bai Xiaochun's face was pale, and he was trembling. In order to kill the man as quickly as possible, he had drawn upon so much energy that his injuries had worsened. Pain radiated up his right leg, and when he looked down, he saw the spear still imbedded into his flesh. He was also soaked with rainwater, which intermixed with the blood to flow down onto the ground. He felt half frozen to death.

Du Lingfei staggered over, and when she saw his leg, she began to weep. She reached out, grabbed hold of the spear, and gingerly



pulled it out of his leg.

To Bai Xiaochun, it felt as if his flesh and bones were being ripped apart. He trembled, but held back from shouting out. The dying words of his opponent, plus the fact that the man had obviously been trying to buy time, caused his heart to sink even lower than before.

He could even sense fluctuations in the wind that told him it wouldn't be very long before more pursuing members of the Luochen Clan showed up.

Du Lingfei threw his arm over her shoulder, and the two of them managed to get back into the cave. Bai Xiaochun kept the spear. Back in the cave, Bai Xiaochun began to pant. His right leg hurt, but thankfully the spear hadn't stabbed into the bone. After binding the wound, he could still feel it, but considering the mortal danger they were in, it wasn't a major issue.

"We need to go. The Luochen Clan could show up at any moment!" Taking a deep breath, Bai Xiaochun slowly rose to his feet.

He looked down at Hou Yunfei, and saw him laying there, struggling for breath. Their days of flight had been like a torment, and he was losing his ability to keep his injuries under control. Du Lingfei was sallow and wan. Her qi passageways had been severely injured, and some had even been severed. It had been an incredible struggle for her to emerge and help Bai Xiaochun in the fight earlier, and now all she could do was look up at him.

In the darkness of the stormy night, her eyes seemed especially beautiful.

“Junior Brother Bai....” she said softly. “Forget about us. You’re much faster on your own.... GO!” Off to the side, Hou Yunfei struggled into a sitting position. Looking exhaustedly at Bai Xiaochun, he nodded in agreement.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were bloodshot as he said, “We can get out of the 5,000 kilometer area in only three days, guys, shut your m–”

Before he could finish his sentence, Hou Yunfei cut him off. “Junior Brother Bai, you escaping and getting word to the sect is the best chance Junior Sister Du and I have....”

Bai Xiaochun laughed bitterly. He was no three-year-old child to believe a lie like that. He knew that even if he did escape and get word to the sect, by the time anyone arrived to help... Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei would already be dead.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun seemed determined to stay, Hou Yunfei started laughing. “Fine. If I die, then you’ll leave, right?”

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun as he realized that Hou Yunfei was stirring his last bit of spiritual energy as if to destroy his own qi passageways.

Hou Yunfei looked at him calmly and continued, “Junior Brother

Bai, are you going to go, or not?!”

Bai Xiaochun was miserable and heartbroken. He took a few steps backward, mixed emotions on his face as he stared at Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei.

A gust of wind blew a strand of Du Lingfei’s hair across her face. She tucked it behind her ear and looked at Bai Xiaochun. Although her face was ashen, somehow, she looked even more beautiful than ever. Her voice soft, she murmured, “I hope... if there’s another life after this one... that I’ll have the chance to meet you again.... Junior Brother Bai... you have to stay alive!”

The instant Bai Xiaochun heard the words “stay alive,” a violent tremor ran through him, and he felt as if he had been struck in the chest by a hammer. Taking another long look at Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei, he finally turned and walked out of the cave, unsure of what exactly he was feeling inside. A moment later, he was speeding through the stormy night.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had finally chosen to leave, Hou Yunfei let out a soft sigh. Du Lingfei watched him leave, wishing him the best in her heart. She truly wished... that she could make time flow in reverse, that she could return back to the time... when she had first met Bai Xiaochun.

Everything was quiet for a moment, but then Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei suddenly looked out in Bai Xiaochun’s direction, and their faces flickered.

His cultivation base was erupting with power, his internal spiritual energy surging outward, even causing the rainwater to distort.

He was like a brightly burning torch on a dark night that not even the coldness brought by the rain could dispel. Even someone very far away would be able to sense it.

Lightning snaked across the sky as Luochen Clan cultivators from several different directions suddenly sensed Bai Xiaochun.

Chen Heng's eyes glittered as he looked in the direction of the upsurge of power.

Bai Xiaochun flickered into motion, flying up the mountainside past the cave. As he flew by, Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei could hear him whispering something to them.

“I'll get their attention. You two find a way to escape... Come on, go!”

Tears began to stream down Du Lingfei's face as her heart was battered by incredible waves of emotion. Hou Yunfei was likewise shaken.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun burst out with incredible speed as he picked a different direction to flee in.

Bai Xiaochun sped along, cackling madly and crying out at the

top of his lungs, “Dead! They’re dead! Luochen Clan, I can’t wipe all of you out, but the Spirit Stream Sect will definitely come and kill you all!”

He appeared to be heading in a direction which would quickly lead out of the 5,000 kilometer area. Furthermore, from the way he was yelling, it seemed obvious that his two compatriots were dead, and that he was hysterical. Even if he might die in the attempt, he would break out and pass word to the sect, to make sure that revenge was had.

Chen Heng instantly realized what was happening, and his face flickered. Although he couldn’t be sure whether or not Bai Xiaochun was putting on an act, he could tell that, based on his current speed, he could succeed. Chen Heng definitely didn’t dare to gamble with the fate of his sect by ignoring the threat.

He immediately transmitted a message to the other Luochen Clan cultivators. “Everyone kill him! Even if his friends aren’t dead, they’re definitely seriously injured. We can track them down after we kill this one!”

All of the Luochen Clan cultivators shot through the rain at top speed toward Bai Xiaochun.

Lightning crashed and rain fell. Back in the darkness of the cave in the mountain, Du Lingfei gritted her teeth and wiped the tears off of her cheeks. Then, her eyes began to glow with determination.

She knew that the only way to save Bai Xiaochun was to escape the 5,000 kilometer area and get word back to the sect.

She looked over at Hou Yunfei, whose eyes flickered with the same determination as hers.

“Don’t worry about me,” he said. “Let’s split up. Whichever of us gets out first can bring help from the sect to save Junior Brother Bai!” Hou Yunfei was determined to use his last bit of energy to try to break out and get help for Bai Xiaochun, even if he died in the process.

The two of them took deep breaths and then ran out into the rain, splitting up and heading in two different directions, calling upon all the strength they could manage. They were already on the verge of collapsing, but by sheer force of willpower, they managed to exceed the limits of their bodies.

Thunder boomed and lightning fell. Bai Xiaochun was speeding along as fast as he could. He had already lost sensation in his right leg, and his eyes were crimson. A sensation of deadly crisis thrummed in every inch of his body.

He was scared, terrified of dying, certain that death was right on his heels, on the very brink of swallowing him up.

He wasn’t sure if his actions just now had been impulsive or not, or whether or not he might regret his decision. After all, the purpose of Immortal cultivation was to live forever.

In fact, there was still a voice in his head telling him... to run away on his own....

However, he couldn't forget the feeling of what it was like to be struggling with his two friends to survive. That feeling of facing the danger as a team was something he couldn't get rid of. He couldn't forget how Hou Yunfei had threatened to kill himself to get Bai Xiaochun to leave, nor the beautiful smile on Du Lingfei's ashen face.

If he could only pick fear of death, or loyalty to friends, he would pick the latter!

"Elder Sister Du, Elder Brother Hou, you have to stay alive!" Gritting his teeth, he flew onward with reckless abandon. "You want to wipe us out, Luochen Clan? Alright, bring it on!"

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glowed with savage fury, like a caged animal ready to fight for its life.

# Chapter 58: The Cornered Beast Fights!

---

Rain fell in sheets, thunder crashed, and lightning danced across the sky. The world was a mix of darkness and light, filled with rumbling booms and the sound of raindrops smacking onto the ground.

From a distance, everything seemed to be a haze of rain, completely somber and desolate.

Bai Xiaochun trembled as he sped forward with all the speed he could muster. He flew along, feet pounding the ground, occasionally leaping into the air over some obstacle. He was like an arrow loosed from the bowstring, whistling through the air.

“Have to stay alive,” he muttered. “You guys... have to stay alive!” That was what he kept repeating to himself as the images of Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei continued to flash in his mind.

The shadow of death loomed, fusing with the rain, making everything around him seem even colder than usual.

By this point, roughly nine figures were speeding toward him from various directions. The furthest person away from him was Chen Heng, but he was also the fastest. He was like a beam of light stabbing through the sheets of rain, moving faster and faster, causing rumbling sounds to echo out.

“You can’t escape! Nobody can escape from our Patriarch’s spell formation!” Killing intent flickered in Chen Heng’s eyes.



He had never imagined that three Outer Sect disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect would manage to evade him for so many days, and in fact, even get close to the border of the spell formation set up by his Patriarch. As for the disciple they were currently closing in on, he had a profound cultivation base, sufficient to not only strike down Chen Yue, but numerous other members of the Luochen Clan.

He was now more convinced than ever that this person was one of the famous Chosen from the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect, either Shangguan Tianyou or Lu Tianlei. After all, when it came to the affairs of the south bank, the north bank usually wouldn't interfere.

“Spirit Stream Sect Chosen....” Chen Heng thought, eyes glittering with killing intent, and even a spark of amusement.

Rumbling thunder filled the air as Bai Xiaochun sped along with gritted teeth. He was panting, and his internal spiritual energy was fading quickly. Because of the rain, it was hard to see anything, and he almost felt as if some primordial ancient beast had swallowed up Heaven and Earth.

Suddenly, Bai Xiaochun looked up with bloodshot eyes, looking fiercely at certain fluctuations in the rainwater a few dozen meters up ahead. Popping sounds rang out as countless raindrops then exploded and shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Behind that sheet of rain was the first Luochen Clan member

who had arrived to intercept Bai Xiaochun!

He was a middle-aged man, and the ugly scar which ran down his face made him look extremely ferocious. On top of that, he had a cultivation base in the great circle of the seventh level of Qi Condensation. He shot toward Bai Xiaochun, hefting a gigantic battle-axe in his right hand. As he closed in, he gripped the haft of the axe with both hands, lifted it high into the air, and swung it down viciously toward Bai Xiaochun!

“You’re not going one step further!” the man barked, his voice booming like thunder.

Bai Xiaochun didn’t hesitate for even a moment. As the axe descended, he shot forward, shooting his left hand out toward the axe itself!

The middle-aged man laughed coldly, pouring more cultivation base power into his hands, causing the axe to scream madly through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

In the instant that Bai Xiaochun extended his left hand, a black flicker of light could be seen as his Undying Iron Skin was unleashed. Even as his left hand made contact with the axe head, it turned completely pitch black.

A boom rang out as Bai Xiaochun’s left hand clamped onto the axe with such incredible force that the surrounding rainwater began to vibrate, and then exploded into a haze.

Pain exploded out within him, and blood flowed, and yet the power of his Undying Iron Skin kept his hand safe, albeit injured.

The middle-aged man frowned, then tried to jerk his axe away. However, Bai Xiaochun's grip was like an iron vice that kept the giant axe completely locked down; no matter how the middle-aged man struggled, he couldn't move it even a teeny bit.

The man's face flickered, and then he looked up and realized that Bai Xiaochun's eyes were blazing with flames of madness!

It was a madness that this man had only ever seen within the eyes of various wild beasts in the Fallenstar Mountains.

The man's heart instantly began to pound, and in the blink of an eye, the glow of defensive shields sprang up around him. Without any hesitation, he let go of the axe and fell back.

He was fast, but... Bai Xiaochun was faster!

Even as his left hand maintained its grip on the axe, his right hand flared with black light, and simultaneously shot out toward the middle-aged man.

His hand pierced through the man's defensive shields, causing cracking sounds to ring out as one layer after another was destroyed. Bai Xiaochun cut through them like a razor-sharp blade through bamboo. At the same time, because of the current state Bai Xiaochun was in, his Throat Crushing Grasp suddenly did

something it had never done before.

Unexpectedly... a gravitational force appeared, causing the middle-aged man to lurch to a stop. Before he could even react, his entire world was completely superseded by Bai Xiaochun's pitch-black hand!

A boom rang out as Bai Xiaochun's hand clamped onto the man's throat and then clenched down hard!

CRACK!

A flicker of disbelief passed through the man's eyes, and then blood oozed out of his mouth. There was no time for him to scream as the bones in his neck were crushed. Then, his head sagged to the side. He was dead!

Disbelief could still be seen in his eyes. Although he had been aware that the person they were chasing was powerful, and had even been prepared going into the fight, the blow he had unleashed moments ago had not been a lethal one. He had only been trying to stop Bai Xiaochun and buy some time. How could he ever have imagined that this skinny Outer Sect disciple of the Spirit Stream Sect would be so utterly powerful?

In the moment that the man died, two more figures appeared off in the distance. Shockingly, one of them had a cultivation base in the eighth level of Qi Condensation!

Seeing their dead comrade in Bai Xiaochun's hand, they let out roars of rage. "Chen Zhong!!"

"You people are forcing me to do this!" Bai Xiaochun growled. He tossed the corpse aside, then quickly changed directions and shot off at top speed. He was shaking, panting, and yet, his eyes gleamed with an even more intensely brutal light than before.

He knew that he couldn't afford to stop for even a moment. After all, the whole crux of his plan was to get the Luochen Clan members to follow him. As he changed directions, he could see a sprawling mountain range off in the distance.

Because that particular mountain range wasn't a specific border region, it didn't have a name. It was a separate mountain range than the Fallenstar Mountains, but was comparable in size, and in fact, perhaps even a bit larger. The rain there fell at a steep angle, and the entire area was crashing with lightning.

In fact, when Bai Xiaochun looked over, the lightning seemed to mass into a sphere which then exploded out into the rain.

Bai Xiaochun sped in the direction of the mountain range, the two Luochen Clan members hot on his trail. At the same time, more cultivators were closing in.

There was even a bright beam of light which was none other than Chen Heng, who was getting closer by the moment.

As the Luo Chen Clan cultivators closed the distance to Bai Xiaochun, he got closer and closer to the tree-covered mountains. He was now several dozen meters away, completely soaked as he ran along. As of this moment, he was on the verge of making it into the jungle itself.

“Stop him!” Chen Heng said grimly.

The cultivator closest to Bai Xiaochun was in the eighth level of Qi Condensation. He let out a roar, then reached out and grabbed the Qi Condensation seventh level clan member next to him. They exchanged a glance, and were instantly thinking the same thing. The Qi Condensation seventh level clan member curled up into a ball, and then the other clan member hurled him forward as hard as possible.

Rumbling sounds filled the air as he called upon all the power of his cultivation base to propel his companion through the air. The second cultivator shot through the rain with explosive speed, and in the blink of an eye, was right upon Bai Xiaochun.

As he closed in, he unleashed his cultivation base, causing thunderous rumbling sounds to echo out. Bai Xiaochun lurched to a stop, spun, and performed an incantation gesture. The wave of a finger sent his wooden sword flying out, and yet the Luo Chen Clan cultivator actually allowed it to stab into him. Even as he passed away into death, a bizarre smile appeared on his face.

Suddenly, he exploded into a cloud of blood and gore that then transformed into a rope of blood that began to entangle Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell, and he turned to flee. However, in that moment of distracted retreat, a screaming sound rose up from behind him, which was an arrow!

That arrow had been shot from none other than the cultivator in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, who currently held a quivering bow in his hand.

The sacrifice of the other cultivator led to a critical moment in which Bai Xiaochun was incapable of dodging!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered. Stopping in place, he suddenly shot directly toward the speeding arrow.

A boom rang out as the arrow stabbed into Bai Xiaochun, causing an explosion of pain that left him pale-faced.

The arrow pierced the bone in his shoulder, shattering it. The arrow itself was made from extraordinary materials, and backed by the power of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, making it incredibly strong. After snapping the bone, it actually sent the skinny Bai Xiaochun flying through the air past the blood rope!

THUMP!

The arrow slammed into a nearby tree, simultaneously impaling Bai Xiaochun!

Delight flickered in the eyes of the cultivator in the eighth level of Qi Condensation. He then flickered into motion, shooting forward and preparing to unleash a second arrow to cut down Bai Xiaochun!

The other Luochen Clan cultivators had brutal grins on their faces as they closed in. However, it was in this moment that Chen Heng's expression suddenly flickered.

“Watch out!!”



## Chapter 59: You Die, I Live!

---

In almost the same moment that Chen Heng's voice echoed out, Bai Xiaochun, who was still pinned to the tree, looked up. A valiant gleam appeared in his eyes as he reached up, grabbed the arrow which was protruding from his shoulder, then viciously pulled it out, ignoring the stabbing pain that resulted.

Blood spurted out, and the arrow itself dragged out chunks of flesh. The pain itself was so intense that Bai Xiaochun trembled. And yet, without the slightest hesitation, he unleashed the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art. Using Heaviness-in-Lightness, he flung the arrow back at the Luo Chen Clan cultivator.

A piercing scream echoed through the air as the arrow accelerated rapidly.

Because of the use of Heaviness-in-Lightness, the force of the arrow was like a towering mountain.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's hands flashed in an incantation gesture, sending his wooden sword flying out in a second deadly attack. A somber, bleak aura raged; his successive deadly encounters with the members of the Luo Chen Clan had provided Bai Xiaochun with incredible hands-on experience in battle. Furthermore, it showed that he seemed to have incredible talent as a fighter hidden deep in his bones, something he rarely revealed to the world. It was only on display now because of the numerous life-and-death situations he had faced.

The Luochen Clan cultivator who had been just about to fire a second arrow was taken aback. He had never imagined that Bai Xiaochun could be so vicious. In fact, now he realized that Bai Xiaochun might very well have intentionally let himself be struck with the arrow, all with the purpose of being able to make this almost instant counter-attack.

The man fell back instantly. He was in the great circle of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and as someone who frequently fought various dangerous beasts in the Fallenstar Mountains, was very experienced. He knew that he had lost the initiative in the fighting, but even as he retreated, he chose not to activate any defenses. Instead, he took advantage of the brief moment he had... to finish drawing the bow!

“Are you gonna block this one?!” he roared, a vicious gleam in his eyes as he launched a second arrow.

In his estimation, Bai Xiaochun would definitely use his wooden sword to block the arrow, which would eliminate one of the two deadly threats which were heading his way, and would give him back the initiative.

However, it was in this very moment that Bai Xiaochun’s eyes turned bright red; he knew that he couldn’t give his opponent even the slightest opportunity to make a move. If he did, then he would most likely be killed.

Gritting his teeth, he decided not to use the wooden sword in defense, and instead allowed the arrow to close in and stab into his abdomen. At the same time, the arrow he had thrown rocketed

forward and pierced into the man's chest. Blood sprayed everywhere as the man screamed, his eyes shining with surprise as the force of the blow shoved him backward even faster.

That was when Bai Xiaochun's wooden sword bore down on the man as though it demanded to end his life. With a swift slashing motion, it completely severed the man's head, which toppled down to the ground.

Having accomplished these things, Bai Xiaochun coughed up a mouthful of blood, and yet didn't hesitate for a moment to race into the cover of the trees, whereupon he vanished.

After a few dozen breaths of time passed, numerous other Luochen Clan cultivators arrived on the scene. As they looked around, expressions of shock appeared on their faces as they realized that Bai Xiaochun was so vicious that he would even injure himself to slay his opponent.

A moment later, a flash of light could be seen as Crown Prince Chen Heng appeared.

He looked at the severed head of his fellow clan member, and then at the other traces of blood in the area. His expression turned grim, and fierce killing intent radiated out from him.

Also in the area were five other clan members, three of whom were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and two being in the seventh.

“Chen Feng, Chen Gu, the two of you go search for the others. We can’t let ourselves be drawn out of our territory. The rest of you... you’re coming with me. We’re bringing back this guy’s head!” With that, Chen Heng flicked his sleeve and headed into the trees.

The two who were in the seventh level of Qi Condensation complied with Chen Heng’s orders and resumed their searching. The other three followed Chen Heng into the trees, eyes flickering with the desire to kill.

Within the jungle that covered the nameless mountain range, Bai Xiaochun proceeded along, dizzy and vision blurred. His shoulder, his abdomen, and his right leg were all seriously injured. Because of the cold brought by the rain, he was shivering even more violently than he would have normally been.

“Am I gonna die...?” he thought, chuckling bitterly. The sight of all his injuries, and the bone-stabbing pain that came along with them, caused tears to well up in his eyes.

He suddenly recalled an image of his parents, lying sick on their deathbeds. Then he remembered how he had watched their bodies slowly growing colder in death.

Perhaps that was when he had started to especially fear the idea of dying.

“I want to live!” he thought. He wiped the tears off of his face with his left arm, then gritted his aching cold teeth as he sped

along through the jungle. He had no idea where exactly he was, nor did he have a plan about what to do. There was only one thought in his head. “I have to stay alive!”

It was actually his fear of death which seemed to give him unending power, and kept him going as he sped along through the stormy night.

Gradually, he came to realize that after all the fighting, his cultivation base was stirring, and he was actually not very far away from breaking through to the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

Eventually, the sun became visible off in the distance, and as the rays of light pierced through the leaves, they reflected off of the falling raindrops, creating a beautiful scene.

Chen Heng and the other three Luo Chen Clan cultivators were following him at top speed. Chen Heng's face was growing increasingly unsightly as he realized that their quarry, despite being so seriously wounded, was moving so quickly through the jungle that they weren't making any headway in catching up. After following him for an entire night, they still had no idea exactly where he was.

Furthermore, the rain ensured that the evidence of his passage was quickly washed away. Despite the fact that they were from a cultivator clan in the Fallenstar Mountains, who frequently hunted beasts in the jungle, they were still unable to track him.

“Alright, let's split up,” Chen Heng said through gritted teeth.

“He’s wounded, so he won’t be able to run for long. The three of you, stay about three hundred meters apart. When you find him, don’t engage! Send me a message immediately!” With that, the other three clan members nodded and headed off in different directions.

Time passed. The next day, Bai Xiaochun was completely worn out, and was reaching his limit. If it weren’t for the fact that he was running for his life, he would have long since collapsed.

His lips were parched and cracked, his face haggard, his pace slowing. After proceeding for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, his face suddenly flickered as he saw a blur of motion to the right. However, no one attacked him. Instead, the figure fell back immediately.

It was a long-faced young man, one of the three Luochen Clan members who had fanned out to search for him. Even as the young man fell back, he pulled out a jade slip which he pressed down onto to send a message.

Bai Xiaochun’s face sank, and he pushed onward into the jungle even faster than before.

The long-faced young man watched him go. Bai Xiaochun frightened him, and even as he debated whether or not to give chase immediately, he saw two figures speeding toward him from off in the distance, and his expression brightened.

Those were the two other clan members, and further off in the

distance, he could even see Chen Heng.

Based on how fast they were moving, the two other clan members would arrive in about ten breaths of time. Chen Heng was a bit further away, and would need roughly twenty breaths to arrive.

The long-faced young man began to laugh heartily. Without any further hesitation, he powered up his cultivation base, simultaneously summoning numerous shield layers. He also slapped his bag of holding to produce a long sword.

It was a greatsword, over two meters long, with an ancient and crude appearance. The young man hefted it, and then swung it through the air, causing whistling sounds to ring out from the sharpness of the blade. Killing intent flickered in his eyes, and he smiled viciously as he shot after Bai Xiaochun at top speed.

“Killing a Chosen from the Spirit Stream Sect is definitely going to be fun! Much funner than killing random rogue cultivators!” Laughing, he slashed the sword through the air, causing a beam of sword light to fly out, accompanied by a sound like rushing wind. He then performed an incantation gesture with his left hand and pointed his finger out, causing a fist-sized fireball to shoot in Bai Xiaochun’s direction.

Despite the falling rain, the fireball exploded with scorching heat as it shot through the air. A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and when he turned to look back, killing intent flickered in his eyes. He was well aware that if he didn’t take out this opponent immediately, it would be impossible for him to escape.

However, in the moment that Bai Xiaochun turned, the long-faced young man suddenly fell back, eyes flickering with derision. There was absolutely no way he was going to give Bai Xiaochun the chance to get close to him. His only goal at the moment was simply to buy time.

Bai Xiaochun's hands clenched into fists, and he began to run again. However, the long-faced young man quickly interfered, delaying him again. A few breaths of time passed, and the other two clan members were closing in. When they saw Bai Xiaochun, their cultivation bases flared with power.

At the same time, the long-faced young man began to laugh. Instead of dancing around like he had been, he unleashed all the speed he could muster. Along with his two fellow clan members, he shot murderously toward Bai Xiaochun.

Three cultivation bases at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. When Chen Heng saw the killing attack being unleashed, he felt a bit more at ease. He was quite confident that, no matter what tricks Bai Xiaochun pulled, he would definitely be killed.

“What a pity,” he said coolly. “He won't even have a chance to grow up.” However, before he could even blink his eyes, his expression flickered.

Even as the three figures closed in on Bai Xiaochun, unleashing various deadly divine abilities and magical techniques, Bai Xiaochun's right hand flashed with an incantation gesture. His



wooden sword flew out toward the middle opponent, and he threw out a punch toward another.

A boom rang out as the wooden sword was blocked. However, the fist strike landed, sending its target tumbling back, blood spraying out of his mouth. Bai Xiaochun also coughed up blood as his injuries worsened. However, before he could retreat, the long-faced youth closed in and slashed out with his long sword, sending a blast of sword light toward Bai Xiaochun.

In the moment of critical danger, Bai Xiaochun barely managed to twist his body to avoid a blow to the heart. The blade stabbed into him, instantly causing sweat to break out all over his body. He shivered, and at the same time, the long-faced young man began to laugh. Then, just when he was about to pull the sword back, Bai Xiaochun reached out and grabbed the blade, then yanked himself forward down to the hilt.

It was a heavy price to pay, but it put him directly in front of the long-faced young man, whose scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. A sudden feeling of intense, deadly crisis washed over him. Just when he was about to drop the blade and jump backward, black light appeared on Bai Xiaochun's right hand as he grabbed the young man's neck.

"You—" the young man said, eyes widening. Before he could say another word...

A cracking sound rang out!

His neck was crushed!

# Chapter 60: Fierce Life-Or-Death Battle

---

The sudden development occurred too quickly. In the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, the number of cultivators who were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation was reduced from three to two. The remaining two gasped, but had little time to ponder the matter, and continued to charge toward Bai Xiaochun.

Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth as he flew back, slamming into a tree and simultaneously pulling the greatsword out of his chest. He quickly slashed the sword out at one of the two remaining opponents. However, his target nimbly dodged to the side, allowing his companion to close in, whereupon his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and incredible power exploded out.

A boom echoed out as Bai Xiaochun was sent flying through the air, blood spraying everywhere. His clothes were now completely soaked with blood as the two Luochen Clan cultivators bore down on him. It seemed like a no-win situation, but Bai Xiaochun hadn't given in to despair yet; he desperately wanted to live. Roaring, he performed an incantation gesture, summoning a long spear, a huge axe, and two flying swords.

Using the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, he sent the weapons slashing viciously toward his enemies.

The faces of the two Luochen Clan cultivators fell. They quickly unleashed magical techniques, causing a boundless black fog to spring up. Booms rang out, and the magical devices Bai Xiaochun had just launched clattered to the ground. At the same time, Bai

Xiaochun himself staggered backward, blood spilling out of his mouth.

“Time to end things!” For the third time, the two cultivators attacked. As the power of their cultivation bases erupted out, it seemed like they would strike Bai Xiaochun down at any moment.

“Stay alive!” he said in a hoarse voice, a gleam of madness in his eyes. “I’ve got to stay alive!”

His internal spiritual energy was flickering on the verge of sputtering out completely, but he let out a roar, and all of the power he had built up in his years of cultivation, power which had seeped into his qi passageways and bones, exploded out like hundreds of flowing streams.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Up to this point in the fighting, Bai Xiaochun had not called upon these scraps of spiritual energy, but now, in this moment of critical danger, he did. They poured into the main qi passageways, and in the blink of an eye, had transformed into a huge river. As it flowed through his body, a sound like pounding drums burst out within him.

At the same time, the cultivation base fluctuations of the seventh level of Qi Condensation suddenly erupted out.

When his two opponents, who were in the eighth level of Qi

Condensation, suddenly sensed those cultivation base fluctuations coming off of him, their faces flickered with shock and disbelief.

“Making a breakthrough in the middle of fighting!?!?”

“How... how is that even possible?!?!” As they reeled in shock, Bai Xiaochun looked up, and his eyes were glowing brightly. The surge of spiritual power couldn’t heal his wounds, but it could revive him from his state of listlessness, and give him one more chance to make it out of the situation alive.

He sprang forward toward the two Luochen Clan cultivators, who cried out in alarm as black light covered his right hand, and the Throat Crushing Grasp was unleashed.

A cracking sound was heard as one of his opponents, unable to dodge, was pulled toward Bai Xiaochun’s right hand. It was almost as if some invisible force were dragging him to Bai Xiaochun, who summarily crushed his neck.

His companion looked on, scalp tingling in shock. When Bai Xiaochun turned to look at him, the man screamed, eyes shining with terror as he fell into retreat.

“Crown Prince, save me!!” This was the sole surviving clan member in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, screaming for help.

At the moment, Chen Heng was still ninety meters away. Seeing

what was happening, he let out an enraged roar.

“Are you looking to die!?!?”

Bai Xiaochun didn't even look at him; he instantly flashed an incantation gesture with his right hand and pointed out. Immediately, the fallen magical devices in the area began to tremble, and then emitted droning sounds as they apparently sensed Bai Xiaochun calling to them.

Then they suddenly flew up into the air, moving far faster than they had before, speeding toward the approaching Chen Heng to block his path.

Banging sounds rang out as Chen Heng was forced to deal with the weapons. He was in the ninth level of Qi Condensation, but even he couldn't instantly bypass them.

As Chen Heng was being delayed, Bai Xiaochun closed in on the remaining cultivator. Eyes flickering with killing intent, he unleashed a fist strike.

A boom echoed out, and blood sprayed from the man's mouth. He was just about to continue to fall back, but didn't notice that Bai Xiaochun had just performed an incantation gesture with his left hand. A wooden sword appeared behind the man, closing in noiselessly and then stabbing through his head in a shower of blood.

The man's eyes went wide as he toppled down to the ground, where he twitched a few times, blood flowing out of his mouth. His eyes faded, and he was dead.

Having accomplished these things, Bai Xiaochun staggered to the side. Although he had just experienced a cultivation base breakthrough, the series of deadly moves he had just unleashed had almost completely drained him. Blood oozed constantly out of his mouth as he once again lurched off into the jungle.

He knew that his final opponent was the strongest of them all, and was already able to sense that he was in the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

“Ninth level of Qi Condensation....” he thought bitterly. His burning desire to live caused his blood to surge through his heart. He knew that this time, either he would die, or his opponent would.

There was no third option.

As he made his retreat, Chen Heng let out an enraged howl. He was surrounded by a blood mist, which caused the magical devices to tremble, and then begin to crack. Moments later, they exploded, and Chen Heng shot out from within the blood mist. When he looked around at his three dead compatriots, he roared in fury, then shot after Bai Xiaochun.

The two of them sped through the jungle of the nameless mountain range, heading deeper and deeper in. Thunder boomed,

even though it was daytime. No lightning was visible, but the rain poured down harder and harder.

“Are you Shangguan Tianyou, or Lu Tianlei!?” Chen Heng yelled. He quickly performed an incantation gesture, causing nine streams of blood mist to shoot toward Bai Xiaochun, like nine blood-colored anacondas.

“I’m your grandpa!” Bai Xiaochun retorted, despite how ashen his face was. After evading the attacks, he glanced back at the Crown Prince, who was getting closer by the moment. Trembling, he crouched down, then shot forward with even greater speed. Even as Chen Heng prepared to do the same, Bai Xiaochun’s foot slammed into a tree, stopping him mid-flight.

Then, he twisted, borrowing the momentum of the tree as it snapped back to shoot toward Chen Heng.

“I don’t care who you are,” Chen Heng said, “today, you’re gonna die!” Killing intent flickered in his eyes, and his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture. Nine blood anacondas once again shot toward Bai Xiaochun with gaping maws.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were bright red as he let out a howl. His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture as he drew upon what remained of his spiritual energy to form a violet cauldron. The cauldron instantly spread out to surround him, completely blocking the path of the nine blood anacondas as he smashed toward Chen Heng.



“Child’s play!” Chen Heng said with a cold laugh. Another incantation gesture transformed the nine blood anacondas into a fog, which then re-formed around him in the shape of a blood-colored skull. Then the skull shot toward the violet cauldron.

Massive booms rang out as the violet cauldron cracked and then exploded. The blood fog skull was significantly damaged, but remained intact.

After the collision, the collapsed cauldron revealed Bai Xiaochun, who shot out of the fragmented remains toward the fog beneath him.

At the same time, Chen Heng’s eyes flickered. Then he leaped upward out of the fog, right hand flashing an incantation gesture to produce a vicious ghost face.

At the same time, he threw his head back and glared at Bai Xiaochun.

Their eyes met, and then they slammed into each other, one using a fist, the other a palm. Black light flashed as the Undying Iron Skin went into action to meet the bizarre magical technique that was the ghost face.

A deafening boom rang out. Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun’s mouth, and cracking sounds rang out from within him as he was sent tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut, to slam into a nearby tree.

Chen Heng was shaken, and his face was ashen. His qi and blood were churning, and shock filled him regarding how powerful Bai Xiaochun was. However, he instantly shot back toward his opponent, raising his right hand, which caused all of the fog in the area to form together into a huge, blood-colored face which crushed down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered with the ferocity that comes from being pushed into a corner. He twisted in mid air, pointing toward Chen Heng to unleash the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art.

He wasn't using it to control random objects, but instead, Chen Heng's body! It was a technique Chen Heng had never even heard of before. Suddenly, a powerful force wrapped around him, as though a gigantic hand had grabbed him.

He laughed coldly as his cultivation base erupted out, and the blood-colored face howled, causing Bai Xiaochun's spiritual energy to shatter. At the same time, Chen Heng quivered.

It was in that moment that a wooden sword shot toward him, and Bai Xiaochun also charged forth, holding nothing back as he called upon the full power of his Undying Iron Skin.

"What a joke!" Chen Heng said, flicking his sleeve. The blood-colored face passed through him, crushing toward the wooden sword. When the two met, the wooden sword trembled, but didn't break. Instead, it stabbed through the face, opening up a gap.

Bai Xiaochun dove in through that very gap, relying on his

Undying Iron Skin to deal with the injuries. As he shot out, Chen Heng's eyes flickered, and he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand.

The wave of a finger caused an arc of blood-colored light to appear, a curving blade that sliced toward Bai Xiaochun.

In the blink of an eye, the curving blood-colored light hit Bai Xiaochun, who coughed up a mouthful of blood. And yet, his fist, backed by the full power of his cultivation base, rocketed out.

A boom rang out as Chen Heng was shoved backward by several paces, his face draining of blood. However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't done yet. As of this moment, it seemed he was completely overdrawing on his strength and even his life force... to unleash an explosive attack.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

# Chapter 61: Fatal Attack!

---

Bai Xiaochun moved so incredibly fast that Chen Heng didn't have time to react. Punches and kicks instantly turned into a maddening storm of attacks.

Chen Heng's expression was extremely unsightly as he performed incantation gestures to summon protective shields. Rain pelted down in the jungle, and booms echoed out as he fought with Bai Xiaochun.

The battle so far left Chen Heng dumbfounded. Earlier, he had already acknowledged that this particular Outer Sect disciple of the Spirit Stream Sect was formidable, but it wasn't until actually fighting that it became clear how much he had underestimated him.

To be able to slaughter over ten of his fellow clan members, including cultivators in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, with seeming ease, indicated he had a high level of skill. That was not something that an ordinary qi Condensation disciple could do. The Spirit Stream Sect was one of the great sects, so it was expected that their disciples would surpass the local cultivator clans in terms of latent talent, but he had never imagined that the disparity would be like this.

“His fleshly body is too resilient. What body refinement technique does he use? Don't tell me that his power and speed are both a result of body refinement?!” Chen Heng flicked his sleeve, sending a fog rolling out to defend against Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun ignored any potential injuries as he attacked again. At

the same time, Chen Heng's face grew more and more pale.

“Most terrifying are his powers of recovery! If his cultivation base were at the eighth level of Qi Condensation... I wouldn't be a match for him at all!” Chen Heng couldn't imagine how someone could receive so many injuries, and yet still be able to unleash such explosive power. Virtually anyone else who was on the receiving end of such punishment would have long since passed out.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun was like an oil lamp running out of oil, just barely holding on.

“I need to get this battle done with and kill him,” Chen Heng thought, eyes glittering coldly. “That way no other complications will arise!” However, it was at this point that Bai Xiaochun's eyes also glittered, and he suddenly fell back, performing a double-handed incantation gesture; Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning sent a huge cauldron rumbling toward Chen Heng.

Chen Heng's eyes narrowed as the fog which surrounded him transformed into a huge hand that shot toward the cauldron. The two collided, and the cauldron instantly collapsed, as if it hadn't been backed by even the smallest bit of power.

Chen Heng instantly realized that he had been fooled, but he didn't seem fazed at all, and in fact his eyes glinted sharply.

“Red Devil Grand Magic!” he said coolly. Immediately, massive amounts of red light shone out, and his skin turned crimson.

Even as that happened, Bai Xiaochun leaped into the air and swung his left leg toward Chen Heng in a powerful arcing kick which kicked up a huge wind.

Chen Heng chuckled coldly, thrusting his right forearm out to block the kick.

BOOM!

A sound like thunder rang out, accompanied by cracking sounds. Tears streamed down Bai Xiaochun's face as he staggered back, heart thumping.

“How did this guy get so strong so fast?” he thought. “Red Devil Grand Magic? His skin is red, and now he's way more powerful!” Bai Xiaochun was in so much pain that his heart was shaking. His left leg was twisted at an odd angle, and although his skin remained intact, the flesh underneath was mangled, and bones were broken. His breathing was ragged, and he was exhausted. Each time his injuries worsened. Bai Xiaochun felt as if he couldn't go on any further. By this point he had come to the realization that his body was constantly fixing itself. The strange regenerative power ensured that even the most serious of injuries were slowly healed. He wasn't sure, but guessed that it might be an outworking of the Undying Live Forever Technique.

Chen Heng's right arm seemed to be fine, but closer examination would reveal that it was shaking. His skin was even redder than before, and the bones inside were broken.

“You have your body refinement technique, and so does my Luo Chen Clan!” Chen Heng began to advance with speed that seemed even greater than Bai Xiaochun’s; it was almost like he was a different person, a person with boundless power at his disposal.

In the blink of an eye, fierce fighting was once again underway within the jungle.

Booms rang out constantly. Bai Xiaochun’s right leg was seriously hurt, and the bones of his left leg were broken. He could barely stand straight, and was suffering setback after setback. The sensation of imminent death grew stronger. This Chen Heng was by far the most powerful opponent Bai Xiaochun had ever fought.

Bai Xiaochun eyes were bloodshot as his right hand shot out. Black light shone as the Throat Crushing Grasp was unleashed, like a bolt of black lightning that shot toward Chen Heng’s throat.

Chen Heng’s eyes shone with an intense light when he realized that this was a move he had seen before, and was prepared to face. Red light flashed around him as Bai Xiaochun’s right hand closed in. Chen Heng reached out casually, grabbed Bai Xiaochun’s right hand, then crushed it hard. Cracking sounds rang out as Bai Xiaochun’s hand was completely shattered.

Chen Heng frowned; he hadn’t expected things to be this simple. But then his heart seized as he thought about the vicious tactics Bai Xiaochun had already used in the fighting, and how he would even allow himself to be injured in order to unleash a devastating attack. Chen Heng instantly pushed back, and especially tried to move his neck out of the way.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's left hand shone with black light, shooting past Chen Heng's neck and latching onto his shoulder.

The power of the Throat Crushing Grasp erupted, and a cracking sound rang out!

Chen Heng's face was ashen, and sweat was pouring down his face. The bones of his left shoulder instantly shattered, and the intense pain caused him to let out a bellow of rage.

Red light shimmered around him as he unleashed massive power, grabbing Bai Xiaochun's left hand. Although Bai Xiaochun was inclined to pull his hand back, Chen Heng was too fast, and in an instant, his hand locked onto Bai Xiaochun's.

"Die!" he howled, eyes bloodshot as he performed an incantation gesture with his left hand and then reached out to tap Bai Xiaochun's forehead.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered with a vicious gleam as he suddenly leaned to the side, allowing the bones in his left hand to snap as his right leg shot through the air and slammed into Chen Heng's body.

Blood sprayed out of Chen Heng's mouth, and he was sent tumbling backward, with no choice other than to release his grip on Bai Xiaochun. That in turn allowed Bai Xiaochun to fall back at high speed.



Within an instant, roughly thirty meters of space opened up between the two of them. Bai Xiaochun's hands were both crippled. His right arm was mangled, and although the left one was intact, his twisted fingers were incapable of unleashing the Throat Crushing Grasp.

Both of his legs were shaking. The left one was distorted into an odd shape, and blood soaked his right leg. The kick he had just unleashed had come with a terrible price.

He could barely stand up, and was in fact forced to lean back against one of the towering trees. He bit down on his tongue to force himself from lapsing into unconsciousness. He was now at his very limit. The only limb he could actually move was his left arm. Everything was numb. And yet, he still looked like he wanted to fight.

As for Chen Heng, his eyes were bright red. His left shoulder felt like it was on fire, and he couldn't even lift his right hand. Several of his ribs were broken, and blood oozed constantly out of his mouth.

"I underestimated you!" he said hoarsely, glaring at Bai Xiaochun. He could never have imagined that with a cultivation base like his own, it would be so difficult to kill the injured Bai Xiaochun. From the look of it, Bai Xiaochun's body refinement practices had led to some sort of undying secret magic that kept him alive despite such serious injuries.

In fact, to deal with him, Chen Heng had used almost every magical technique at his disposal, even the Red Devil Grand Magic.

“Alright, it’s time to end this fight!” Chen Heng took a deep breath. Suddenly, all of the redness in his skin seemed to evaporate, transforming into a mist that rose up into the air. Normal color rapidly returned to Chen Heng’s skin, and he seemed to weaken dramatically. The fight had been a difficult one even for Chen Heng; his opponent’s tenacious desire to stay alive, his shocking restorative powers, and his willingness to sustain damage to inflict fatalities was completely shocking.

“Red Devil Secret Magic, Blood Saber... Attack!” Chen Heng bit down on his tongue and spit out a mouthful of blood. The blood merged into the blood mist from moments ago, which then roiled and, in the blink of an eye, transformed into a long, blood-colored saber!

The illusory saber was over three meters long and, shockingly, was covered with innumerable faces, all of which were emitting torturous screams. Chen Heng waved his finger, and the blood-colored saber began to move toward Bai Xiaochun!

Utilizing this secret magic caused Chen Heng to sag again in weakness, and he was forced to reach out and support himself on a nearby tree. His face was ashen, and some of his hair had even turned white.

“Die!” he growled, giving Bai Xiaochun an enraged stare.

An unprecedented sensation of crisis exploded up within Bai Xiaochun as he realized that no matter what he tried to do, he would not be able to dodge or evade this blow. He was stuck.

A crevice snaked toward him on the ground, and the tree behind him withered as the long, blood-colored saber rose up high... and then slashed down toward him!

Bai Xiaochun trembled, and his pupils constricted. He didn't want to die, and in fact was terrified of it. Unfortunately, the regenerative properties of his Undying Live Forever Technique weren't so Heaven-defying that they could keep up with his current injuries. However, even as the blade descended, a sudden bit of inspiration flashed in his mind. Without the slightest hesitation, he waved his left hand, and a black beam of light shot out. In the blink of an eye, it grew larger, right there in front of him, forming into the shape of... a wok!

It was none other than the turtle-wok!

As soon as the wok appeared, the blood-colored blade slashed down onto it, and a deafening boom rang out. The blood-colored blade began to vibrate violently... and then shattered into countless pieces!

As for the turtle-wok, not even the slightest crack appeared on its surface, although the force of the attack transformed it into a black beam of light that shot back inside of Bai Xiaochun.

“Impossible!!” A tremor ran through Chen Heng, and he coughed

up a mouthful of blood, an incredulous look on his face. He had already been in a weakened state when unleashing the magic, and now that it was broken, the backlash power slammed into him, instantly evaporating his spiritual power and turning his vision dim. “What... what is that thing!?!?”

“That’s Lord Turtle!” Bai Xiaochun growled as he stood there, clinging onto life. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and he rocked back and forth as he stood there. He stepped back, sliding down the trunk of the tree into a sitting position, and began to laugh bitterly.

“Too bad I don’t have any weapons....” He could sense his life force fading away, and his vision was swimming. He thought of summoning his wooden sword, but simply didn’t have the energy. Calling forth the turtle-wok had taken the last scrap of spiritual power he had. He couldn’t even open his bag of holding.

“I don’t care what secrets you hold, once you’re dead, everything you have will belong to me.” Chen Heng said, breathing raggedly. He was also like an oil lamp on the verge of sputtering out, although he was in a slightly better position than Bai Xiaochun. After a few breaths of time passed, he struggled to his feet and produced a long sword from his bag of holding, hefted it, and began to walk toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked at him silently, eyes somewhat blank. He thought back to life in his village, and then he thought about Big Fatty Zhang. He recalled Li Qinghou, the Spirit Stream Sect, and the other amazing people he knew. Du Lingfei. Hou Yunfei. Hou Xiaomei....

Chen Heng slowly approached, then looked down at Bai Xiaochun, who was already emanating a powerful aura of death. He could see that Bai Xiaochun was riddled with wounds, and that he didn't even have enough spiritual energy to open his bag of holding.

“Remember my name. I'm the person who killed you... Chen Heng of the Luochen Clan.” He raised the sword, which he normally could send flying out with the flick of a sleeve, but now seemed extraordinarily heavy. “It's a wonderful feeling being able to kill a Chosen.”

Chen Heng was so tired that he was on the verge of passing out, but his eyes glinted with cruelty as he stabbed the sword down toward Bai Xiaochun's chest.

However, even as he did that, Bai Xiaochun suddenly swung his left arm, slamming it into the ground. The bones snapped, and one of them even pierced out through his skin by about three inches.

Then he lurched to his feet, propelling his left arm with the last bit of energy he had. Even as the sword stabbed into his chest, his arm slammed into Chen Heng's neck, and the bone... pierced directly into his throat.

Then Bai Xiaochun fell to the ground and, energy completely spent, lapsed into total unconsciousness.

A tremor ran through Chen Heng. Everything had happened too

quickly, giving him no time to prepare or react, and he had been too exhausted to dodge. Once the bone stabbed into his neck, blood began to pour out onto the ground. He tried to cover the wound, but it did no good. He stared down at his own blood on the jagged bones which protruded from Bai Xiaochun's arm, and couldn't help but marvel at how ridiculous the situation was. It didn't even seem possible. Eyes flickering with an unyielding gleam, he thought about all of his goals and pursuits in life, and then laughed a bitter laugh.

“That was your dying blow, huh....” He staggered back and toppled to the ground, dead, his eyes staring up into the sky.

## Chapter 62: Killing A Chicken With A Battle-Axe!

---

Deep within the jungle of the nameless mountain range, the rainfall eventually began to lighten. Around evening, it stopped, and the setting sun just managed to create a little bit of a rainbow.

However, as the sun set, the rainbow gradually faded away.

The jungle was quiet. Even the stench of blood had vanished. However, the corpse-lined path stretching backward bore testament to the deadly fighting which had played out.

As Chen Heng slipped away into death, his eyes continued to shine with an unyielding, incredulous expression.

Next to his corpse, Bai Xiaochun lay still and unmoving. The flame of his life force was roughly ninety percent extinguished, with only a little spark left behind, struggling to stay alive.

Eventually, footsteps could be heard from off in the distance. Someone was walking through the muddy rainwater and fallen leaves, to eventually come to a stop next to Chen Heng.

It was an old man wearing a long black robe. He had flowing white hair, and his face was covered with wrinkles, making him seem profoundly ancient. Apparently, he had lived for so long that an aura of death was already seeping out from him.

“Intense focus has bolstered his soul... he’s dead, and yet his soul hasn’t dispersed. But that won’t last for long.” The man’s voice was raspy, but also vague and bizarre as it echoed out into the jungle. Suddenly, the forehead of Chen Heng’s corpse split open, and a green wisp of qi floated out. It swirled together in midair, forming into the blurry image of a soul, about the size of the palm of a hand.

This was Chen Heng, although his eyes were blank and he was trembling, as if his mind and consciousness were gone.

The old man extended a finger, and Chen Heng’s soul flew toward him and disappeared inside.

After taking away Chen Heng’s soul, the mysterious old man looked over at Bai Xiaochun, mixed emotions playing out on his face. He even seemed to be reminiscing about the past.

“I never imagined that I would once again lay eyes on... the Undying Live Forever Technique....” He closed his eyes for a moment, and then sighed. That sound seemed to transform his surroundings. Time seemed to suddenly flow differently, as if the entire area were being separated from the rest of the world.

The innumerable plants in the area suddenly went still, as if in death, and then transformed into ash.

Chen Heng’s corpse instantly withered up, and within the space of a few breaths of time, was nothing more than a skeleton. Even that turned into dust, which crumbled down into the muddy



ground.

Only Bai Xiaochun wasn't affected. In fact, vast amounts of life force poured into him, rapidly healing his various injuries.

The old man stood there with his eyes closed, as motionless as a statue. It almost looked... as if he possessed no aura whatsoever, nor any life force. It was like he didn't exist at all within the world, a discarnate soul who refused to be reborn.

Meanwhile, in the same moment that Chen Heng died, Patriarch Luo Chen was back in the Luo Chen Clan in the Fallenstar Mountains. Suddenly, his eyes snapped open, and an uneasy feeling filled his heart. He looked around at the clan members around him, and could see that quite a few of the eleven cultivators sent out of the clan had been killed. However, when he saw that Chen Heng's soul still existed, he felt slightly better.

"They're only three Outer Sect disciples, how could they have lasted so long...?" he muttered. "So many clan members have been killed. Well, considering the level of Heng'er's cultivation base, there's no way they could kill him. Most likely, he's already wiped them out and is on his way back." The uneasy feeling still lurked there inside of him, though. Eyes flickering, he sent a few more clan members out to investigate, all of whom were in the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

Having done that, he took a deep breath.

"It doesn't matter now. The Inverse Blood Grand Magic only

needs one more day of work!” Gritting his teeth, he suppressed the uneasiness he felt. He knew that there was no backing out of the plan now, and really no other option than to hold on for another day... then everything would be worth it!

In that same moment, Hou Yunfei was in a valley a bit more than five kilometers away from the border of Patriarch Luo Chen’s security spell formation. His face was ashen, and he had reached the point where he couldn’t take another step further. Coughing up a mouthful of blood, he collapsed to the ground, chuckling bitterly.

“Junior Brother Bai... I’m sorry, I can’t save you....” He clenched his hands in anguish and helplessness before passing into unconsciousness.

In another direction was Du Lingfei, her hair disheveled, her skin sallow. Her qi passageways were almost completely destroyed, and she cut a completely different picture than she had in the past, in her peak of beauty.

Her eyes were lustreless, and she looked almost like the walking dead. However, a shocking level of willpower kept her staggering forward, clutching a jade slip in her hand. There was only one thought in her head, a thought that wouldn’t leave.

She had to break free and send word to the sect. She had to... save Bai Xiaochun.

She proceeded along, one step after another. When she fell to the

ground, she would crawl back to her feet. Her clothing was torn, her veins were bleeding dry, and she could barely see clearly. And yet... she kept moving forward.

Time passed. Du Lingfei had long since forgotten about the injured state of her body. She wasn't thinking about her own life, nor could she even remember how long she had been walking. She proceeded along until suddenly she experienced a sensation like passing through a sheet of water. In that moment, her eyes began to shine brightly.

“Am I out...?” she murmured through parched, cracked lips. Trembling, she looked at the jade slip clutched in her hands, the jade slip which hadn't so much as vibrated once during the past half month. But now, it vibrated, as though an invisible connection had suddenly been established... linking her to the sect.

“The Luochen Clan has turned traitor. Elder Brother Feng died in battle. I'm not sure if Elder Brother Hou is still alive, and Junior Brother Bai... drew the enemy away so that we could escape. I am disciple Du Lingfei, and I beg of the sect... to send backup immediately.” As soon as she finished sending the message, Du Lingfei sagged down into a sitting position. Then she turned to look behind her, tears streaming down her face.

She would never forget how Bai Xiaochun had returned to fight, as if he had veins of steel. She would never forget the tragic and moving image of him running out to draw the attention of the Luochen Clan. She would never forget everything that had happened on their journey together.

“Junior Brother Bai, Elder Brother Hou... you have to stay alive....” Du Lingfei wept, her tears falling to the ground in front of her. Eventually, she couldn’t hold on any longer, and collapsed into unconsciousness.

As Du Lingfei was transmitting her message, the Missions Office back on the Fragrant Cloud Peak in the Spirit Stream Sect was as busy as ever. Outer Sect disciples were running back and forth handling various tasks, and deep within the Missions Office itself, there was a middle-aged man in a Daoist robe who was in the middle of maintaining the records about various missions. Arrayed in front of him was a collection of thousands of jade slips, which contained the information of all sect disciples with open missions.

Suddenly, one of the jade slips flickered with light. Expression the same as ever, the middle-aged man waved his hand, causing the jade slip to fly over into his hand. After scanning it with divine sense, his eyes went wide, and he shot to his feet.

“The Luo Chen Clan has turned traitor!!” he cried, panting. The enormity of such a matter could not be understated. Whether or not it was true or false, he absolutely had to report the matter to his superiors. Holding back such information was a crime punishable by execution, so he didn’t dare to dally. He immediately produced a violet jade slip from his robe and transmitted the new intelligence.

The report was instantly sent to the Hall of Justice. Of course, Qian Dajin worked in the Hall of Justice, but he had a very lowly position, and an intelligence report like this was something he didn’t even qualify to look at. Almost as soon as the report arrived

at the Hall of Justice, the entire organization sprang into immediate action. After all, the Hall of Justice was tasked with defending the entire Spirit Stream Sect, and the efficiency with which they went about it was shocking.

It only took the time it takes an incense stick to burn to verify the authenticity of the report.

Then, war drums began to sound through the entire south bank. All of the disciples looked around in shock. The Outer Sect disciples didn't know the significance of the war drums, but the Inner Sect disciples on the three mountain peaks all knew, and it caused their expressions to flicker as they looked up from whatever they were doing.

“What happened?”

“When the war drums beat, we can't return to the Spirit Stream Sect until blood is shed and the enemy clan is exterminated!! Heavens....”

Even as everyone was reeling in shock, the voice of an old man suddenly filled the entire south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect.

“I am Ouyang Jie of the Hall of Justice. All Inner Sect disciples of the south bank's three mountain peaks are to immediately cancel all previous missions, activities, and secluded meditation sessions. You have twenty breaths of time to gather at the main gate! Lateness will not be tolerated!”

Even as the words left his mouth, the Inner Sect disciples on Green Crest Peak, Fragrant Cloud Peak, and Violet Cauldron Peak immediately dropped whatever tasks they had at hand. Trembling, but without the slightest hesitation, they sprang into motion.

Even people involved in important tasks didn't dare to tarry for even a moment. Everyone knew that Ouyang Jie was an Elder of the Hall of Justice, and that he was... cold-hearted and merciless!

He had a Daoist name in addition to his given name; he was known as Daoist Jackal. For him to take the lead in a sect affair meant that something completely infuriating had occurred. It meant... that people needed to die. It meant... that a clan needed to be exterminated!

Rumbling sounds filled the air as countless figures appeared, speeding toward the main gate. Soon it became clear that among the three mountains of the south bank, there were at least two thousand Inner Sect disciples. Normally, it was a difficult thing to catch sight of one or two, so the sight of so many left the Outer Sect disciples completely shaken.

There were also several hundred disciples from the Hall of Justice, clad in black robes and led by an old man with bright red hair. That old man radiated intense killing intent, and he was none other than Ouyang Jie.

Soon, over two thousand people were gathered around the main gate, all of whom wore grim and somber expressions.

“The Luochen Clan has turned traitor. The Sect Leader has ordered that their clan... be exterminated all the way down to the chickens and dogs. Activate the Daoseed Teleportation Portal!” Ouyang Jie waved his sleeve, instantly causing a huge pillar of light to rise up from Mount Daoseed, in the middle of the Spirit Stream Sect.

The light climbed up into the air, transforming into a huge teleportation portal, which instantly enveloped the two thousand disciples. Rumbling could be heard as the teleportation process began.

The Outer Sect disciples of the south bank gasped, and suddenly, they were filled with sensations of deep pride regarding their sect.

Compared to the Spirit Stream Sect, the Luochen Clan was small, with only one Foundation Establishment cultivator. And yet, for the sake of a few Outer Sect disciples, the Spirit Stream Sect had mobilized two thousand individuals. Then there was the violent and powerful Ouyang Jie. All of that... was a mighty threat!

It was a threat to all of the cultivator clans in the territory controlled by the Spirit Stream Sect. The old saying asks, “Why use a battle-axe to kill a chicken?” In this situation, the Spirit Stream Sect provided the answer: “How else do you kill chickens than with battle-axes?!”

This was a sect that wouldn’t hold back any resources, not even when it came to Outer Sect disciples. That in turn caused the Outer Sect disciples’ loyalty toward their sect to reach new heights.

The Spirit Stream Sect had stood strong for ten thousand years, growing from a tiny little organization to its current height. Naturally, there were aspects to it that others would find astonishing!

It was in this moment that, all of a sudden, there on the temple at the very top of Fragrant Cloud Peak, Li Qinghou flew out, face grim, aura murderous. That aura swept out explosively, creating a wild tempest as he shot toward the teleportation portal.



## Chapter 63: Crushing The Luo Chen Clan!

---

It only took Li Qinghou a moment to reach the teleportation portal, where he hovered like an unsheathed blade, radiating an intense murderous aura.

Ouyang Jie looked over at him, and his pupils constricted slightly. Among the three Peak Lords on the south bank, Ouyang Jie viewed Li Qinghou as the most important. In fact, he was actually one of the most important people in the entire Spirit Stream Sect.

Not only was he a master apothecary, his profound natural talents were extremely rare. For example, he had only practiced cultivation for about a hundred years, but had already reached late Foundation Establishment. In fact, it was even said that, within the entire sect, he was the most likely candidate to break through from Foundation Establishment and acquire a Gold Core.

“I heard that one of those four Outer Sect disciples is connected to Li Qinghou somehow....” Ouyang Jie thought. At the same time, rumbling could be heard from the spell formation, and countless dazzling beams of light rose up. Instantly, the group of two thousand cultivators, including Li Qinghou, became blurry, and then disappeared altogether.

The journey which had taken Bai Xiaochun and the others several months to complete, occurred in only a few seconds, thanks to the activation of the Spirit Stream Sect’s teleportation portal.

Rumbling like thunder filled the air over Du Lingfei's unconscious form. The sky dimmed as something like an invisible hand ripped open a huge rift, revealing the image of an enormous spell formation.

It descended rapidly to the ground, causing everything to quake in a fifty kilometer area. Blazing, fiery lines appeared in the ground as the shape and design of the spell formation appeared on the surface of the land.

Within that 50 kilometer area, all grass, rocks, mountains, everything turned into ash, vanishing in an instant. This spell formation was incredibly domineering, and destroyed everything that got in its way.

Du Lingfei was in that area, and immediately fell under the protection of the spell formation, ensuring she wasn't harmed at all. Even as the land shook, numerous figures came into view.

It took only a moment for the more than two thousand Inner Sect disciples from the south bank to appear. There was still enough teleportation power swirling around them for another teleportation to be carried out, but first, Ouyang Jie and Li Qinghou strode forward to the unconscious Du Lingfei. Several female disciples reached her ahead of them, covering her with a set of spare garments and also administering some medicinal pills. With the influx of spiritual energy, Du Lingfei gradually opened her eyes. Her expression was blank, but when she saw all of the forces from the sect surrounding her, she began to weep, and a feeling of excitement flooded through her.

Furthermore, considering she was an Outer Sect disciple of Fragrant Cloud Peak, when she noticed Peak Lord Li Qinghou standing there, even more tears welled up in her eyes. At the same time, disciples on either side of her helped her to rise to a sitting position.

“Peak Lord, please rescue Junior Brother Bai....” she implored, face ashen.

“What happened to him?!” Li Qinghou said, stepping forward to stand directly in front of Du Lingfei. His eyes burned with fury and deep anxiety.

“Junior Brother Bai... went out on his own to distract the Luochen Clan cultivators so that Elder Brother Hou and I could escape. They started chasing after him....” Weeping, she went on to explain the entire situation.

Virtually none of the surrounding two thousand disciples knew Bai Xiaochun, but as they listened to Du Lingfei’s tale, they were visibly moved. The intense and tragic events even caused them to gasp.

They learned about how Feng Yan fell in battle to protect his fellow disciples, and how Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei risked almost certain death to try to escape. They heard about how the Luochen Clan sent out two waves of cultivators in pursuit, including several in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and one in the ninth....

Even these members of the Inner Sect would be hard pressed to

make it out alive under such circumstances.

When Du Lingfei talked about Bai Xiaochun, they could sense how devoted and loyal he was. In fact, he was already the type of person who could be considered Chosen.

He had the option of fleeing on his own, but instead returned to save his fellow disciples. He fought enemies far more powerful than himself, then helped carry his two wounded companions for more than half a month, on a journey of nearly 5,000 kilometers.

In the end, he chose to sacrifice himself rather than his principles, all to give his fellow disciples a chance to make it out alive. The result was that Du Lingfei was able to send her message. Were it not for that, the sect might not have learned about the traitorous actions of the Luo Chen Clan until it was too late.

It didn't take long before Bai Xiaochun had taken root deep within the hearts of the Inner Sect disciples. To them, he was profoundly devoted and loyal, an elegant and even heroic man, someone with veins of steel.

The people from the Hall of Justice were completely shaken. Among their number was Qian Dajin, whose jaw dropped as he heard Du Lingfei's story. He almost couldn't believe that the Bai Xiaochun she was talking about was the same person in his mind. His impulsive plotting earlier had left him nervous about possible investigations on the part of the sect. Although he hadn't been absolutely sure that Bai Xiaochun was the little turtle, in his pettiness, he would rather kill the wrong person accidentally than risk the right person getting away. As of this moment, he breathed

a sigh of relief. With Feng Yan being dead, there was no way word would get out.

Even the iron-hearted Ouyang Jie, Daoist Jackal, couldn't help but sigh in response to the tale, and a gleam of admiration appeared in his eyes. Considering the level of his cultivation base, he could tell at a glance that Du Lingfei wasn't making the story up; everything she had said, although perhaps not completely accurate, was the truth.

“The Spirit Stream Sect cannot permit a disciple such as that to perish in this place!” Ouyang Jie flicked his sleeve and immediately sent several hundred disciples out to search for Hou Yunfei and Bai Xiaochun.

Li Qinghou slowly looked off into the distance, eyes completely bloodshot, heart aching bitterly. Considering what Bai Xiaochun had done here, Li Qinghou suddenly felt as if he had judged him incorrectly. At the same time, he knew that, considering the circumstances, Bai Xiaochun chances of getting out alive... were small, to say the least.

“And I was the one who brought you to this sect....” he thought. His murderous aura exploded out with even more intensity. Taking a step forward, he drew upon some of the remaining teleportation power to suddenly vanish in the direction of the Luochen Clan.

Ouyang Jie sighed. After hearing Du Lingfei's tale, he knew that the situation did not bode well for Bai Xiaochun. Flickering into motion, he gathered the remaining forces and began another

teleportation.

Rumbling echoed out in all directions as Li Qinghou and Ouyang Jie led nearly two thousand disciples to appear in midair above the Luo Chen Clan mansion in the Fallenstar Mountains.

The cloud layers were ripped apart as the teleportation portal became a powerful attack bearing down with intense energy of Heaven and Earth. Cries of alarm rang out within the mansion as the spell formation descended upon it.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The spell formation landed, instantly shattering the limestone flooring, transforming it into ash. The mansion itself collapsed into rubble.

Roars of rage echoed out as numerous figures flew out, expressions of fury and hopelessness on their faces.

The guardian stone lions and the fruit trees from the courtyard transformed into puppets that instantly went on the offensive. Li Qinghou was the first person to make a move. He waved his sleeve, causing the lions to explode loudly. As for the fruit trees, they trembled, and the fruit began to fall off their branches. However, even as the fruits fled, they were destroyed.

Rumbling echoed out as the Spirit Stream Sect disciples unleashed mass destruction.

Li Qinghou shot toward the center of the destroyed Luochen Clan mansion. His right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he waved his finger, summoning a green fireball. His hair flew wildly about him as he then sent the fireball blasting down into the ground.

Flames erupted, smashing into the rubble of the mansion and sweeping it away. The handful of enemy cultivators who had been attacking let out miserable shrieks as they were instantly incinerated.

Next, Li Qinghou lifted his right foot into the air and stamped it down hard. The land shattered, and a huge crevice was ripped open, revealing the necropolis down below.

At almost exactly the same time, the lake of blood spiraled out, followed by the Luochen Clan's Patriarch.

When the man saw Li Qinghou, his face filled with an expression of despair. The Spirit Stream Sect had arrived too suddenly. The spell formation he was working on was on the cusp of being completed, and had anyone else arrived, he might have been able to delay them for long enough. But unexpectedly, the people who came were none other than Li Qinghou and Ouyang Jie!

The Patriarch fell back, crying out miserably, "Flee! Anyone who can escape, get out of here!"

Trembling, the Luochen Clan cultivators in the necropolis began

to flee in all directions. However, Ouyang Jie's face was expressionless as he waved his hand, sending the Inner Sect disciples after them in pursuit.

Li Qinghou's eyes locked onto Patriarch Luochen, and the lake of blood that surrounded him. Ouyang Jie did the same, and then, flames of rage appeared in both men's eyes.

“You slaughtered innocent mortals?” Li Qinghou growled. “The Heavens cannot tolerate the existence of a clan like yours!” With that, he waved his sleeve, sending a destructive sea of flames out.

At the same time, bloodcurdling screams began to rise up as the Spirit Stream Sect disciples began to slaughter and crush the Luochen Clan cultivators.

Two thousand people versus a few hundred.

Patriarch Luochen could only watch as everyone in his clan was killed, both descendants from his own bloodline, and members of other bloodlines. Screaming miserably, he fled at top speed in an attempt to escape.

However, in that instant, he was overwhelmed by Li Qinghou's sea of flames. Face extremely grim, Li Qinghou clenched his hand into a fist.

**RUMBLE!**



Patriarch Luo Chen's screams intensified as he erupted into flames. His flesh and blood were incinerated, and in the blink of an eye, he was reduced to nothing more than ash. Li Qinghou... killed him with one attack!

When the surrounding Inner Sect disciples saw that, they gasped in shock. Even Ouyang Jie's eyes went wide in astonishment.

As Li Qinghou hovered there in midair, he waved his hand again, sending the sea of flames exploding out again. The entire Luo Chen Clan was engulfed, and everything began to burn. Li Qinghou looked off into the distance, his expression somewhat disconsolate.

Sighing, he said, "Bai Xiaochun, I, Li Qinghou... have let down your Bai Clan." In his bitterness, he flew off into the distance. He wasn't willing to entrust the search for Bai Xiaochun to others. If there was even the slightest hope that he was alive, he himself would search for him.

Li Qinghou left, flames rising high into the sky behind him. As for the Inner Sect disciples, expressions of excitement began to appear on their faces. Now more than ever, they realized how powerful and glorious their sect was.

## Chapter 64: Morale And A Funeral

---

As Ouyang Jie watched Li Qinghou leaving, his voice rang out to the surrounding disciples. “Split up and do everything you can to locate Bai Xiaochun. Whoever finds him will receive a reward of merit points from me personally. If you encounter any surviving Luochen Clan cultivators, kill them!”

Two thousand cultivators spent an entire month searching the 5,000 kilometer area.

They searched virtually every possible location, but no one ever found Bai Xiaochun. However, they did discover the corpses of the Luochen Clan cultivators he had killed. As corpses turned up one after another, the Inner Sect disciples grew more and more shocked.

Virtually all of the Luochen Clan cultivators had been killed with a single blow. The Inner Sect disciples could scarcely imagine how an Outer Sect disciple in the sixth level of Qi Condensation could possibly have done something like that.

Qian Dajin gasped over and over again, and suddenly realized it would actually be much better for him if Bai Xiaochun was dead. He himself was probably not a match for someone so violent and powerful. Li Qinghou’s fury caused him to grow more nervous, and he even began to wail inwardly.

“Dammit! Why didn’t you tell me you had such connections? If you had, I would never have provoked you!”

Eventually they found the corpses of the three disciples who were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and they could only imagine what that bitter, intense battle must have been like. It left them reeling.

Soon everyone came to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun... had most likely been killed in that nameless mountain range. That was a place rife with perilous beasts, and numerous other dangers that could kill a person and leave no corpse behind.

Eventually, they captured the two Luochen Clan disciples that Chen Heng had dispatched after Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei in different directions. When they learned that one of the people chasing Bai Xiaochun had been none other than the Luochen Clan's Crown Prince, who was in the ninth level of Qi Condensation, they all resigned themselves to the fact... that Bai Xiaochun really must be dead.

After the month of searching ended, everyone returned to the sect. Hou Yunfei had been found relatively early on, seriously injured, but alive. With the full power of the sect focused on healing him, he ended up being just fine.

Both he and Du Lingfei had performed significant meritorious service for the sect, but that left them with no feeling of excitement. Instead, they felt sadness, and couldn't stop thinking about the events which had occurred.

Both of them wanted to go back to join the search efforts when

they were underway, but their injuries were too serious. The only person who refused to give up on searching for Bai Xiaochun was Li Qinghou. He journeyed alone into the nameless mountain range, where he searched for two full months. Other than a few places that even he couldn't enter, he searched the length and breadth of the mountains. Strangely, even though it seemed clear that Bai Xiaochun had to be in these very mountains, he couldn't find a single trace of him. It was almost as if Bai Xiaochun were currently in some other world.

During the process of the search, he ended up fighting quite a few powerful beasts, and was even injured by some of them. Two months later, it was with great bitterness that he stood in front of a certain tree with a bloodstained scrap of cloth stuck to it.

“If I hadn't brought you to the sect....” Li Qinghou thought. When he closed his eyes, he recalled the image of Bai Xiaochun there on Mount Hood, looking scared to death of the lightning and thunder. He thought about how frightened he had looked at 10,000 Snakes Valley, about what had happened during the sect competition, and about how he had taken first place in all the stone steles.

He sighed silently, seemingly growing older as he reached out and picked up the bloodstained cloth. He had already picked up seven or eight similar pieces of cloth just like this during his search.

In the end, he left the jungle, transforming into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

Thus ended the rebellion of the Luo Chen Clan. The Spirit Stream Sect struck like lightning, completely wiping out the traitors. The matter caused quite a stir in the Eastwood Lower Reaches of the Heavenspan River. In the cultivation world of the Eastwood Continent, which was one of the four great continents, countless cultivator clans and sects learned of the matter. As a result, the awe felt toward the Spirit Stream Sect grew, a sect that was one of the Four Great Sects in the Eastwood Lower Reaches.

After an investigation by the Spirit Stream Sect, they found some clues as to why the Luo Chen Clan had turned traitor. The bloodline seal was one reason, but there was an even more profound motivation. After piecing together various clues, the vast ramifications left the Spirit Stream Sect shocked.

If they hadn't stopped the matter when they did, the resulting chain reaction would have led to numerous other cultivator clans hearing about the matter and then following along in the rebellion. It would have been almost the same as a powerful enemy invading Spirit Stream Sect territory, and would have led to grave repercussions, potentially even the destabilization of the sect.

The news about the deeds accomplished by Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei quickly spread, as did the stories of Bai Xiaochun nobly sacrificing himself.

The fact that he had refused to abandon his fellow disciples, and had even used himself as bait to lead the enemy away, left many people moved. The cultivation world was full of selfish people; individuals like Bai Xiaochun were not common. The loss of such a disciple left many people, even the Sect Leader and Elders, feeling

very aggrieved.

There were other implications that came along with the whole event. However, as more clues came to light, the Spirit Stream Sect only grew more silent. For some unknown reason, they eventually stopped investigating. However, all of the Foundation Establishment cultivators in the sect increased their level of vigilance to a point far beyond normal.

Apparently... a storm was coming.

The south and north banks together had seven Peak Lords. In addition to that were the Sect Leader and other Elders. After much discussion and research, they came to a unanimous decision.

Du Lingfei, Hou Yunfei, as well as the perished Feng Yan, had all performed meritorious service. As for Bai Xiaochun... he had accomplished a tremendous service beyond the ordinary!

The final decision was explained by the Spirit Stream Sect's Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong. "A storm is coming. The most important thing... is to lift everyone's spirits. For ten thousand years, the morale of our sect has remained high. Considering the tremendous service Bai Xiaochun has performed, at the cost of his very life, we can only repay his kindness by having a grand funeral. Those who contribute to the sect shall never be forgotten."

In the following days, although the Spirit Stream Sect didn't investigate any further into the reasons for the betrayal of the Luochen Clan, they took every opportunity to spread the story of

how Bai Xiaochun had sacrificed himself for his fellow disciples, and how he had nobly fought for the sect.

As the story was propagated, more and more disciples from the various mountain peaks on both the south and north banks learned of the name Bai Xiaochun, and what he had done to save his fellow disciples.

Of course, the sect itself wasn't ambivalent to such a devoted and loyal disciple. Li Qinghou had eradicated an entire clan, and two thousand Inner Sect disciples had been mobilized. Sending such a powerful force to handle the situation was like killing a chicken with a battle-axe.

Not only did all the disciples in the sect remember Bai Xiaochun's name, they were moved by how the sect reacted to the situation. Even though the sect had obviously reacted in such a way intentionally... that reaction was exactly what the disciples expected.

For ten thousand years, that was the unchanging tradition of the Spirit Stream Sect.

Touch one of our disciples, and you will die, no matter how far you run!

When a Spirit Stream Sect disciple went outside of the sect, they were never alone: they were backed by the entire Spirit Stream Sect. The sect was like a shield, eternally there for their protection.

Because of that, the disciples were devoted to their sect, and would expend any and all effort, even give up their lives, to defend it, their home.

That was the mighty Spirit Stream Sect, which had started out ten thousand years ago as a tiny sect with only a few dozen people in it.

In order to determine whether or not Bai Xiaochun was really dead, the Sect Leader asked for help from one of the sect's Prime Elders, who was adept at divining information from the Heavens. Unfortunately, his divination magic did not reveal any hint that Bai Xiaochun was still alive in the world. The only thing he discovered was an aura of death, which seemed to prove that Bai Xiaochun... had died in battle, fighting for the sect.

On a rainy morning a few days later, the mournful tolling of bells could be heard throughout the Spirit Stream Sect. Countless disciples wearing black robes emerged silently from their residences, expressions grief on their faces as they gathered midway up Fragrant Cloud Peak.

There, a gravestone had been erected, with a portrait of Bai Xiaochun on it, smiling happily.

Big Fatty Zhang stood there in the crowd. He glanced at everyone around him, and then looked at the gravestone, and Bai Xiaochun's name. As the rain fell and soaked his clothing, he wept, recalling all of his memories of the past. He thought about how they had eaten the various pilfered spirit treasures, about how they had laughed and joked together, about how they had sold spots in the



Outer Sect, and about stealing chickens....

“Ninth Fatty....” Big Fatty Zhang murmured, looking very sad. His heart felt empty, and the pain made the entire world seem dark.

The other fatties from the Ovens, Bai Xiaochun’s Elder Brothers, were all filled with grief, and couldn’t stop crying, including Third Fatty Hei.

Xu Baocai, Chen Zi’ang, Zhao Yiduo and Elders Xu and Zhou, as well as everyone else Bai Xiaochun had come to know since joining the sect, all stood in the crowd, faces filled with grief.

Zhou Xinqi came and stared silently at the gravestone. After hearing the story of what Bai Xiaochun had done, she couldn’t help but think of how zealously he had searched for the chicken thief.

Hou Yunfei came, propped up on the shoulder of Hou Xiaomei. He stood there, fists clenched, shaking in grief.

“Junior Brother Bai....” A bitter smile twisted his face. After returning to the sect, he begun spending his days drinking. He just couldn’t forget that moment in which Bai Xiaochun had led all the enemies away, using himself as bait.

More and more people showed up, until the middle section of Fragrant Cloud Peak was densely packed with countless disciples, all silently looking at the gravestone.

At the front of the crowd was Du Lingfei. Her face was pale, and it was impossible to tell the difference between the tears that streaked down her cheeks, and the rainwater. She seemed to be in a daze, and while her face was as beautiful as it had always been, that beauty was now sad and poignant.

“You could have stayed alive... but here I am, and you’re gone....” Du Lingfei’s days had been spent in sorrow and misery recently. She had lost weight, and often dreamed about that moment in which Bai Xiaochun had returned, unshakeable and determined. And then he had left, a scene which left her weeping and wracked with pain.

As the mourning bells tolled, echoing about in all directions, beams of light shot toward the gravestone from all directions. Within them were the seven Peak Lords, all of the Spirit Stream Sect Elders, and even the Sect Leader. They wore black robes, and as they gathered near the gravestone, their expressions were those of sorrow.

As for Li Qinghou, bitterness and self-reproach filled his heart.

A moment later, the Sect Leader began to speak, his voice calm and slow.

“Bai Xiaochun was an Outer Sect disciple of Fragrant Cloud Peak in the Spirit Stream Sect. He was a blazing sun in the Dao of medicine, a Chosen among disciples. In his battle against the Luochen Clan, he killed numerous Luochen traitors, and sacrificed

himself to save his fellow disciples. He was loyal to his sect, and gave his life in the most tremendous display of meritorious service. Disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect will remember his name for all eternity!”

His voice was filled with grief, and as his voice echoed out, Du Lingfei’s tears flowed even harder. Hou Yunfei, Big Fatty Zhang, and countless other people were all weeping.

“On this day, I confer upon Bai Xiaochun the title of the Spirit Stream Sect Prestige disciple!” In response to the Sect Leader’s words, countless disciples were shaken. To hear the term Prestige disciple left everyone moved.

That position was a matchless honor within the Spirit Stream Sect, and there could only be one Prestige disciple within the sect within any generation. It was a position higher than the Inner Sect, and on equal standing with Successor disciples. There was no greater honor for the dead.

Throughout the ten-thousand-year history of the Spirit Stream Sect, there had only ever been nine disciples with such a title, each and every one of whom had been conferred with it after dying in battle for the sect. As of this moment, there were now ten such disciples in the history of the sect.

Not a single person present felt the honor was inappropriate. Bai Xiaochun had earned it with his life.

“From the time he joined the sect until he sacrificed his life,”

continued the Sect Leader, “Bai Xiaochun never had a Master. Having given his life for the sect, I refuse to allow him to wander alone in the underworld. Therefore, I shall represent my dead teacher, Daoist Master Spiritsieve, to accept Bai Xiaochun as his apprentice. Henceforth, he can continue to pursue the great Dao in the underworld.” In response to the Sect Leader’s words, Li Qinghou nodded, pain flickering in his eyes as he looked at the gravestone.

“And now everyone... shall observe a moment of silence!” With that, the Sect Leader closed his eyes. Looking at the gravestone, he bowed his head, as did all of the other disciples present.

After a few breaths of time passed, the moment of silence ended. Du Lingfei couldn’t hold her feelings in any longer, and began to wail.

In the same moment that everyone was observing the moment of silence, back in the nameless mountain range, Bai Xiaochun slowly opened his eyes and sneezed.

## Chapter 65: Shou Lingren

---

The moment of the sneeze was the same moment that Bai Xiaochun woke up. His mind was still in the same state it had been when he was seriously injured and fallen into a coma, so as soon as he woke up, he subconsciously cradled his left arm and let out a miserable cry. However, as soon as that cry left his lips, he looked down in surprise at his arm, and then at the rest of his body. He began to poke and prod himself, and even opened his garments and looked at his soft, white belly.

“Eee? No injuries?” Suddenly, his eyes flickered with fear as he recalled something that the old folks back in the village used to say. Supposedly, when someone died, their soul would enter the shadows of the underworld. At the moment, he obviously had no injuries, which meant that he must only be a soul.... Shivering, he looked around and realized that everything around him was dead. Even all the plants and grass were withered up. Chen Heng’s corpse was nowhere to be seen.

As he looked around, he also noticed fog everywhere. He couldn’t see much at all, and everything past a certain distance was a complete blur. A faint aura of death pulsed in the area, causing a cold sensation to wash through his body.

“That’s it. It’s over.... I was so careful for most of my poor little life, only to end up losing it....” Bai Xiaochun was now even more certain that he was now a lost soul. His face twisted bitterly, and he let out an anguished moan.

“I never even got to give Du Lingfei a chance to pay me back with

all her heart.... Elder Brother Hou still has his promise to keep.... People still don't know that I'm Lord Turtle, and there are still lots of Spirit Tail Chickens to eat in the world. I... I haven't lived forever yet...." The more he thought about it, the more it hurt inside. Tears began to well up in his eyes.

However, even as he began to wail loudly... someone cleared their throat behind him.

The sound came so suddenly that it startled Bai Xiaochun.

"Who's there?!" he shrieked, scrambling forward across the ground and then spinning around, a wooden sword appearing in his hand.

He saw an old man standing over by where he had just been laying. He wore a long black robe and looked almost like a corpse as he stared at Bai Xiaochun in a very ghastly manner.

His body radiated a strong aura of death. Coupled with the copious amounts of wrinkles which covered his pale face, he seemed like he had just climbed up out of the grave. He perfectly matched his surroundings, and looked utterly horrifying.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun laid eyes on him, all the hair on his body stood on end, and he suddenly recalled countless scary stories about murderous ghosts. But then he realized that if he himself was dead, then he didn't have anything to worry about. Sticking his jaw out, he gave a cold harrumph and then slowly rose to his feet.

“Alright then. You’re a ghost. I’m a ghost. Since we’re both dead and both ghosts, then who’s afraid of who, huh?” He walked up to the old man, then circled around him with a low-pitched, quizzical whistle.

“You must be a ghost who lives in these nameless mountains. No need to be nervous. I was just passing through and happened to die. I’ll be on my way in a moment. Ai. I wonder if I can continue to live forever and practice cultivation now that I’ve become a ghost. Maybe I can become a ghost that lives forever.” Suddenly, grief rose up once again in Bai Xiaochun’s heart, and he sighed.

The black-robed old man looked at Bai Xiaochun and frowned. Then, he spoke in a raspy voice: “How come you’re not dead?”

Bai Xiaochun started in surprise, then suddenly seemed to think of something. He bit down hard on his tongue, and when the pain coursed through him, he almost couldn’t believe it. He bit down again, this time until tears poured down his cheeks. His expression lit with delight, and he literally began dancing up and down. He even threw his head back and laughed loudly.

“I’m not dead!! Hahaha! I, Bai Xiaochun, have a matchless cultivation base! I am invincible in Heaven and Earth. How could I possibly die!?” He was so excited that he reached out to grab the old man’s arm, except that his hand passed right through the man, and grabbed nothing but air. At the same time, his hand suddenly felt extremely cold.

“Uh....” Bai Xiaochun suddenly went stiff all over. He stared blankly at the old man, eyes wide, before screaming and leaping backward. “A ghost!!”

Back when he thought he was dead, he didn't think much of seeing a ghost. But at the moment, he was terrified, as the stories of murderous ghosts once again began to flash through his mind.

Soon, he reached the area where the fog grew thick, where he encountered some sort of invisible barrier that he could not pass through. Backing up to the barrier, he gripped his little wooden sword and stared at the old man, countless thoughts fluttering through his mind. Finally, a miserable expression filled his face.

“Sir, do you have some unfinished business in life that I could help you take care of...?”

The black-robed old man had a strange expression on his face as he studied Bai Xiaochun. He couldn't help but muse that the young man standing in front of him seemed a lot different from the steel-veined fighter from before. They almost seemed like two different people. Eventually, a thoughtful expression appeared in his eyes.

“Perhaps only people with personalities like this can truly cultivate the Undying Live Forever Technique....” he murmured. Feeling much more at ease, he shook his head and smiled. Then he turned and began to float off into the distance.

“The Undying Live Forever Technique is divided into the Undying Codex and the Live Forever Codex. Each Codex has five



volumes... what you are cultivating is the most commonly circulated first volume of the Undying Codex, the Undying Skin. You've mastered the Iron Skin, and have made headway with the Bronze Skin!" As the old man floated off, his voice echoed behind him into Bai Xiaochun's ears.

"The Undying Codex breaks through the Five Shackles of mortality. The Live Forever Codex unravels the Five Seals of eternity!

"Work hard at your cultivation. If you can reach the level of Undying Gold Skin, you will encounter the first Shackle of mortality. Whether or not you can break through that Shackle will depend on your own good fortune.

"Since we were brought together by fate, I will give you a medicinal pill. Furthermore, to help you make a breakthrough with your Undying Skin, and achieve mastery of the Bronze Skin, I will give you this jade slip. It contains... the second volume of the Undying Codex, the Undying [Heavenly King](#)!

The word here "Heavenly King" is one of those Chinese words that can be translated many different ways. One slightly more accurate rendition might be [Lokapala](#), but I'm not a huge fan of complicated religious terms like that, especially not in the context of how it's being used here, so I'm going with Heavenly King

If you succeed with the Undying Live Forever Technique, you can... form a Core!" By this point, the old man was so far away he couldn't be seen. However, as his voice echoed out, two beams of light shot through the air and came to hover in front of Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun watched in shock as the old man left. At this point, he realized that the reason he hadn't died, and had in fact completely recovered, was because the old man had saved him.

And the reason for that... was because Bai Xiaochun cultivated the Undying Live Forever Technique.

Although Bai Xiaochun feared death, he took matters of favors and debts seriously. He knew that he had been injured so badly in the fight that he most likely should have died. A tremor ran through him, and, taking a deep breath, he clasped hands and bowed deeply in the direction the old man had disappeared.

"Senior," he called out, "many thanks for the kindness you showed in saving my life. May I respectfully ask your name...?"

"I am... [Shou Lingren](#)," the old man replied, his voice faint and ancient, almost as if it were floating through countless years of time.

Shou Lingren works as a name, but it could also literally be translated as "tomb keeper/protector"

It was in that exact same moment that cracking sounds could be heard from the fog as it suddenly vanished. The area which had been separated from the rest of the world was now unsealed, and returned to its place. The wind blew, lifting Bai Xiaochun's long hair as he looked off into the distance.

After a moment passed, he murmured, “The Undying Live Forever Technique.... Five Shackles of mortality and Five Seals of eternity?” This was his first time hearing of such things.

Finally, he took a deep breath and looked over at the medicinal pill and jade slip. He first took the jade slip, scanning it with divine sense. Inside was the second volume of the Undying Codex.

He put the jade slip away and then looked over at the medicinal pill. Although he was already a journeyman apothecary, he was unable to determine the pill’s quality. He took it in hand and began to examine it. He was a cautious person by nature, and he knew that if the old man in the black robe had wished to harm him, he could have done so in a variety of ways. As such, the medicinal pill would most likely bring only benefits, and would not harm him.

Muttering to himself, he looked around, then put the medicinal pill away and began to walk. As he proceeded along, he looked around at the jungle, and sighed emotionally. When he thought about the whole chase and battle with the Luo Chen Clan cultivators, and the danger that had been involved, he couldn’t shake the feeling of fear that remained in his heart.

“I wonder how Elder Sister Du and Elder Brother Hou are doing.... Did they make their escape...?” At the moment, he didn’t dare to use his jade slip to try to make contact with the sect. He was worried that the Luo Chen Clan cultivators might still be around, and would detect the fluctuations of an attempted transmission. That could lead to a big problem. Patting his bag of holding, he produced Feng Yan’s Windsiff, and after a quick test, confirmed that it was now functional.

His eyes flashed with joy. Although he had his speculations about the current situation, he wasn't anxious to leave the area, so he found a mountain cave where he could rest for a bit. There, he produced his turtle-wok, as well as the medicinal pill given to him by the black-robed old man.

Soon, silver light flashed on the medicinal pill, and three spirit designs could be seen on its surface. Bai Xiaochun picked up the pill, and his eyes gleamed with determination as he popped it into his mouth and swallowed it. Immediately, his body began to thrum, as though a burning fire were giving birth to an indescribable vital energy, which then coursed through him.

He began to shake, and he gritted his teeth, unleashing the Undying Live Forever Technique. Then, he slapped himself, revealing that his skin was no longer pitch black, but instead, now contained a bit of bronze. That bronze color was reaching the point where he almost looked like a statue made of the stuff.

The power inside of him grew more and more intense, and he felt stronger than ever.

However, the energy of the medicine had not been exhausted. After performing the threefold spirit enhancement, the medicinal pill had reached an incredible level of quality. Even in the moment in which his skin was completely bronze, cracking sounds rang out from within him, as if something were breaking.

Lines spread out rapidly across the surface of his skin, constantly

increasing in number until they covered his entire body. An intense pain wracked him, but he endured, and soon, those lines began to turn silver!

The Undying Skin was broken up into the levels of Iron, Bronze, Silver, and Gold!

Even the black-robed old man could never have anticipated that the medicinal pill he gave to Bai Xiaochun would receive a spirit enhancement, and would thus enable him to break through not just into the Bronze Skin level, but past it.

Rumbling sounds echoed out from inside Bai Xiaochun for several days. More and more cracks appeared on his skin, and soon, pieces of skin began to fall off, almost as if he were molting. Furthermore, every falling piece revealed shining silver beneath it.

After ten days, the last bit of skin had fallen off. He was now completely silver, and although it was a dull silver color, when he opened his eyes, they shone with a bright silver glow.

He suddenly burst into motion, causing a shocking boom to ring out. He was now at least twice as fast as he had been before!

His eyes shone with joy as his right hand clenched into a fist and slammed into a nearby boulder. The boulder instantly shattered, not into large chunks, but into dust!

This level of power exceeded his previous level by several times!

Bai Xiaochun was panting excitedly. As of this moment, he was confident that if he fought Chen Heng again, the battle definitely wouldn't be as bitter.

After some more tests, something even more shocking was revealed. His defensive levels with the Undying Silver Skin were such that even his wooden sword with the threefold spirit enhancement was incapable of even scratching it.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with excitement. After ceasing the operation of the Undying Live Forever Technique, his body returned to its normal pure and fair state. He changed his clothes, then began to speed off into the distance, looking very pleased with himself.

## Chapter 66: Going Through Hell Or High Water For The Sect

---

After traveling through the jungle for a bit, Bai Xiaochun started noticing clues that told the story of what had occurred. He quickly became convinced that his suppositions were correct. After emerging from the nameless mountains, he pushed on at top speed for several days until he was back in the Fallenstar Mountains, where he discovered the ruins of the Luo Chen Clan. “It seems Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei really did get word back to the sect.” When he thought back to the bitter events he had lived through, he sighed, then turned and leaped back up onto the Windsiff. Sitting down cross-legged, he set it whooshing off into the distance.

“Back to the sect!” he declared, eyes shining with anticipation. Then he realized that he most certainly had performed meritorious service for the sect, and would surely be handsomely rewarded when he got back.

That got him even more excited. As he traveled along, he turned his attention to his bag of holding. As he sifted through and organized all of the other bags of holding he had collected from the Luo Chen Clan cultivators, he found quite a few random items inside, as well as spirit stones.

In one bag of holding, although he had forgotten who it had originally belonged to, he found the most valuable of all the items. It was a seed, roughly the size of a human fist. It pulsed, almost like a beating heart, as though it contained something alive. However, the beating was growing weaker and weaker.

After a bit of thought, Bai Xiaochun's skill with plants and vegetation led him to a shocking conclusion. This was a valuable and legendary Spirit Seed, which had supposedly become extinct long ago. It was known as a Beastbirth Seed!

According to the legends, if it absorbed another spirit creature's quintessence, it would be able to naturally reproduce that very same spirit creature. To those powerful beasts which had difficulty reproducing, Beastbirth Seeds like this were virtually priceless.

It was the same for cultivators who had powerful spirit creature pets. Cultivators like that all thirsted to possess successive generations of their powerful spirit creatures. Unfortunately, they were usually limited to a single pet, which meant that Beastbirth Seeds were incredibly valuable to them.

It was impossible to say how the enemy Luochen Clan cultivator had come to possess such a valuable item. Presumably, it was some type of good fortune that person had come across. After all, the Luochen Clan had been located in the Fallenstar Mountains, a place... of boundless mysteries.

After some more thought, Bai Xiaochun came to the conclusion that whichever Luochen Clan cultivator discovered the Beastbirth Seed likely didn't know what it was, which would explain why it hadn't been maintained properly.

Along the way, Bai Xiaochun picked up some wood which was infused with spiritual energy. After carving it into a little box, he carefully placed the Beastbirth Seed into it, where upon the seed's life force fluctuations gradually stabilized.



Bai Xiaochun put the wooden box away and took a deep breath. Then, he sent the Windskiff speeding over the horizon, following the same path they had originally taken, to make his way closer and closer to the Spirit Stream Sect.

A month passed by quickly enough. On the original trip, they hadn't possessed very many spirit stones, and thus had only used the Windskiff at night. But now, Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding was bulging with spirit stones, and he wasn't worried at all about wasting them. Therefore, it only took a month before the Spirit Stream Sect's south bank gate came into view.

"It's been more than half a year since I left. Finally, I'm back." Bai Xiaochun stood atop the Windskiff, hair whipping in the wind, looking every bit like a powerful master. However, he suddenly decided that it was the wrong image, and quickly changed back into the dilapidated, bloodstained Outer Sect disciple's robe that he had worn during his desperate battle with the Luo Chen Clan.

Now he looked like someone who had been willing to fight to the death for the sect. Upon his return, the bloodstains on his garments, and the various places where the cloth had been ripped and punctured, would bear clear witness to the dangerous crises he had faced.

Feeling very pleased, he sent the Windskiff even closer to the sect. However, just when he was about to cross the border, an invisible barrier appeared, sending the Windskiff bouncing backward.

“Huh?” he thought. The force of the rebound almost knocked him off the Windskiff.

It was at this point that a beam of light suddenly shot toward him from the main gate. A young man appeared, expression placid as he looked at Bai Xiaochun.

“Unknown Fellow Daoist, what brings you to the Spirit Stream Sect?” Even as the words left his mouth, he looked at the Windskiff, and then at Bai Xiaochun’s clothes, and his brow furrowed. “You have a Spirit Stream Sect Windskiff, and you’re wearing the robes of an Outer Sect disciple? Plus the main gate of the spirit Stream Sect prevented you from entering?! Who are you?!”

The young man’s eyes glittered coldly as he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand. Instantly, his cultivation base surged with the fluctuations of the eighth level of Qi Condensation.

Bai Xiaochun backed up, looking at the shield in confusion.

“Elder Brother,” he said, “what’s going on? Why can’t I enter the sect? I’m Outer Sect disciple Bai Xiaochun from Fragrant Cloud Peak!”

The young man frowned, and just when he was about to say something, he started in surprise.

“Wait, you’re Bai Xiaochun?” The more he studied Bai Xiaochun, the more familiar he looked. He had attended Bai Xiaochun’s funeral service, in which his portrait had been on display above his gravestone. A tremor ran through the young man, and when he realized that Bai Xiaochun’s garments were stained with blood, he gasped. “You’re... you’re not dead?!?!”

“I’m not dead at all!” Even as Bai Xiaochun stared in surprise, the young man excitedly pulled out a jade slip and sent a message back to the sect.

As the news about Bai Xiaochun was being sent back, Li Qinghou was in secluded meditation on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Suddenly, his eyes opened, and a tremor ran through him.

At the same time, the news was passed to the Sect Leader, whose jaw dropped. He immediately sent a stream of divine sense out to the main gate of the south bank, and when he saw Bai Xiaochun, he was first shocked, then delighted. He immediately began to send notifications out into the sect.

It only took a few breaths of time for gasps of disbelief to begin to rise up. The collective sound was so loud that it was even faintly audible outside of the main gate. Furthermore, bells began to toll.

“Bai Xiaochun? Didn’t he die? How could he be alive?!?!”

Countless people began to fly out from within the sect. Somewhat surprisingly, the very first in line was Hou Yunfei. When he emerged from the main gate and saw Bai Xiaochun, an

expression of disbelief appeared on his face. After the deadly chase they had both participated in, he never wanted to believe that Bai Xiaochun was actually dead. However, deep in his heart, he was sure that no disciple could have been made it out of such a bitter situation.

Now, he was so excited he began to cry.

“Junior Brother Bai!!” he cried. Laughing, he rushed forward and embraced Bai Xiaochun.

“Elder Brother Hou....” Bai Xiaochun replied, blinking. By this point, he realized that the sect had thought him to be dead. He looked at Hou Yunfei, eyes brimming with happiness.

“Come on, let’s get back to the sect!” Hou Yunfei said excitedly. He grabbed Bai Xiaochun and immediately headed back through the main gate. With Hou Yunfei there, Bai Xiaochun could now enter the sect. As for the young man from earlier, he followed along, clearly shaken. He had personally participated in the extermination of the Luo Chen Clan, and had seen the evidence of the battle fought by Bai Xiaochun, including the mangled corpses of the Luo Chen Clan cultivators. To see that Bai Xiaochun had returned alive left him deeply astonished.

Almost as soon as Bai Xiaochun walked through the front gate, more people began to rush toward him from all directions.

“Ninth Fatty?!” Big Fatty Zhang, Third Fatty Hei, and the other Fatty Elder Brothers from the servants district were so happy they

were shaking. That was especially true of Big Fatty Zhang, who gave Bai Xiaochun a big bear hug, tears streaming down his face.

Bai Xiaochun was moved. Seeing how many people were crowding around him, he suddenly felt as if everything he'd done really had been worth it.

Then, a beam of light flew over, which was Li Qinghou, who had an incredulous look on his face as he looked at Bai Xiaochun. In his hands was a bag, within which were all the bloodstained scraps of clothing he had gathered up when searching for Bai Xiaochun.

He more than anyone understood the grave and deadly peril Bai Xiaochun had faced.

Bai Xiaochun hurried forward, clasping hands and bowing to Li Qinghou. "Greetings, Peak Lord!"

Li Qinghou was normally a very calm person, but right now he couldn't stop himself from trembling. Reaching out, he placed his hand on Bai Xiaochun's head and said, "I'm just glad you're alive," Li Qinghou said. "Just glad you're alive."

"This is my home!" Bai Xiaochun said, puffing his chest out. "I'm willing to go through hell or high water for the sect!" Then he waved his sleeve, deliberately revealing the numerous bloodstained holes in it.

People continued to stream over from all three of the south

bank's mountain peaks. Everyone wanted to see Bai Xiaochun, and when they saw his dilapidated, bloodstained clothing, they were shocked.

That was especially true when people began to spread the words he had just spoken. Everyone was shaken, and when they looked at Bai Xiaochun, in their hearts they felt... that he was a true sect Chosen.

As the crowd built, the weeping voice of a young woman could be heard. It was none other than Du Lingfei. She had spent the recent days awash with tears, to the point where she had even lost weight. When she heard people saying that Bai Xiaochun had returned, her mind began to thrum, and she instantly dropped everything and raced over.

When she actually laid eyes on Bai Xiaochun, even more tears began to flow. She hurried over and wrapped her arms around him, crying and laughing and the same time. She almost didn't seem to dare to believe that what she was seeing was true. In response, Bai Xiaochun felt a warm sensation in his heart.

His hands almost began to move in the direction of certain bulging areas of her clothing, but then he remembered that there were lots of people watching, and he held back.

"It's like I said, Elder Sister Du," he said coolly, lifting his chin, "if I, Bai Xiaochun, have only one breath of air left, I would never let anyone harm you." As the sappy words left his mouth, he seemed like he was looking down on the entire world.

However, Du Lingfei went a bit limp, and deep within her eyes, the hidden emotions therein turned even sweeter than before.

People from the Hall of Justice were also there, led by Ouyang Jie. When he saw Bai Xiaochun, he looked shocked for a moment, but then profoundly pleased. That was especially true when he saw Bai Xiaochun's tattered state, and then heard the words he had just spoken to Li Qinghou, upon which he nodded his head.

“Bai Xiaochun, I am Ouyang Jie from the Hall of Justice.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard the words ‘Hall of Justice’, his heart thumped, but then he thought back to the incredible service he had performed. Chest puffed out just like before, he clasped hands respectfully to Ouyang Jie.

Ouyang Jie rarely smiled, but he was smiling now as he said, “Why don’t you come back with me to see the Sect Leader and talk about what happened with the Luo Chen Clan?”

He waved his finger in Bai Xiaochun's direction, causing a spirit fog to appear beneath his feet, which sent him flying off into the distance with Ouyang Jie.

Li Qinghou looked profoundly glad as he transformed into a beam of light that also shot away with them.

As for all the other disciples, they watched Bai Xiaochun leave,

and most heaved surprised sighs, and began to discuss the matter amongst themselves as they dispersed. Of course, the news about Bai Xiaochun being alive spread rapidly.

Eventually, virtually everyone in the Spirit Stream Sect came to know of the matter. Most people were very happy, but back in his Immortal's cave, Qian Dajin was shaking, and a look of terror could be seen on his face.

“Dammit, I can’t believe he’s not dead!! How could he have escaped from such deadly pursuit!?”

“He probably doesn’t know that I’m the one who arranged for him to go on that mission though.... Right? There’s no way he could know....” Various expressions flashed across Qian Dajin’s face. Finally, he sighed, thinking about all the possible bad things that could happen.



## Chapter 67: Elder Brother, Where's Our Master?

---

The Spirit Stream Sect had eight mountain peaks. Four were on the north bank, three were on the south bank, and one was in the middle.... That was Mount Daoseed, which was the public seat of the sect's power. Normally, Spirit Stream Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong would handle sect affairs from that very location.

Currently, bells were tolling as the Lords of the various mountain peaks of the north and south bank sat tall and straight in the main temple hall. The Sect Leader was also there, sitting in the center position.

Soon, Li Qinghou and Ouyang Jie arrived with Bai Xiaochun. They left Bai Xiaochun outside of the temple hall, telling him to wait there as they went in.

There were four disciples stationed as guards outside the temple, who cast curious glances Bai Xiaochun's way.

Bai Xiaochun smiled back at them. This was his first time coming to this place; the spiritual energy was abundant, and the fragrant aroma of plants and flowers filled the air. There were no extraneous sounds in the air; everything was calm and quiet, much different than Fragrant Cloud Peak.

This was a very important place in the sect, and normally, any disciple who came here would act very cautious and discreet. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't seem to feel any pressure at all, and

stood there looking very much at ease.

The four disciples couldn't help but sigh at this, and muse that Bai Xiaochun really did deserve to be known as a big shot in the sect, someone who had performed an incredible service. After all, ordinary people could never act so casually in a place like this.

The truth was that although Bai Xiaochun feared death, after considering the meritorious service he had performed, he knew that he wouldn't be dying here. Therefore, it was only natural that he wouldn't be afraid. He stuck out his chest, heart filled with anticipation over what his reward might be.

“Considering the level of service I provided for the sect, they'll have to give me a medicinal pill to increase my longevity by a hundred years. They'll most likely give me 1,000,000 merit points too, and probably an incredible Immortal's cave. I'm sure to be promoted to the Inner Sect as well. Hahaha.” The more he thought about it, the more excited he got. After a long moment passed, however, no word came calling him into the temple.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback. He continued to wait until he was yawning before, finally, a voice spoke in a somewhat begrudging tone.

“Bai Xiaochun, come in.”

His spirits instantly lifted. Taking a deep breath, he tried to like the picture of a disciple who would go through hell or high water for his sect. Striding into the main temple, he clasped hands and

bowed.

“Disciple Bai Xiaochun from Fragrant Cloud Peak, at your service. Greetings, Sect Leader. Greetings, other Senior members of the sect.”

After offering formal greetings, Bai Xiaochun looked up. He immediately caught sight of an old man sitting in the middle of the group. He looked threatening without being angry, and wore a long white robe. His cultivation base was completely unreadable.

He was surrounded by eight others, a group of six men and two women. Li Qinghou and Ouyang Jie were among them, and all of them seemed to be measuring up this Bai Xiaochun who had somehow returned alive.

Their eyes lingered on his garments. Considering the power of their eyesight, it was instantly obvious to them that Bai Xiaochun’s clothing had not been intentionally torn, but that he had truly experienced a deadly battle.

They also noticed how pure and fair he seemed. He spoke courteously, and was neither haughty nor overly humble. From the expression on his face, he seemed completely at ease.

Although none of them reacted at all to what they were seeing, inwardly, their impressions of Bai Xiaochun improved even more. However, a few were still somewhat suspicious of exactly what had occurred.

Li Qinghou looked at Bai Xiaochun and then slowly said, “Bai Xiaochun, please explain in detail everything involved with the mission to the Luo Chen Clan, from start to finish.”

Looking very serious, Bai Xiaochun calmly recounted everything that had occurred, from beginning to end. He left out the incident with the black-robed old man; that was his secret to keep.

He wove Feng Yan sacrificing himself into the story, as well as the various difficulties they had faced. He was an intelligent person, so he didn't mention anything at all of what he had done that was worthy of merit, but instead continued to praise Feng Yan, Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei.

“It's all my fault for being useless,” he said. “Elder Brother Feng died trying to save me. It's all my fault....”

The more he went on in this way, the more the Sect Leader and the others' eyes shone with approval. Of course, these people had practiced cultivation for many years, and were as crafty as devils. From the moment Bai Xiaochun came back wearing that one particular set of clothing, they could tell what type of person he was. Even so, their praise only continued to grow.

“After he lost consciousness, he just woke up all healed?” the Sect Leader thought, smiling. He didn't mind this version of Bai Xiaochun's explanation. After all, disciples always had secrets to maintain. It was best for them to feel like they belonged in the sect, and exercising absolute control of every aspect of their lives would only serve to have the opposite effect.

After the story was finished, the Sect Leader said, “Bai Xiaochun, your reward was already announced several months ago. Back then, you became the Spirit Stream Sect’s... Prestige disciple!”

When the Sect Leader actually spoke the words ‘Prestige disciple’, a strange feeling rose up in his heart. After all, this was the first time there had ever been a living Prestige disciple.

That was one of the reasons why the discussion had been so difficult earlier. The position of Prestige disciple was extremely important, and had previously only been conferred upon people who had died in battle, never living disciples. And yet, here Bai Xiaochun was right in front of them, healthy and no worse for wear....

That was one reason why all of them had been so shocked to hear the news that he was alive.

Furthermore, it was a status that could not just be stripped away. The funeral service had been carried out, and the meritorious service performed. The group had been somewhat perplexed about what to do, and thus had left Bai Xiaochun waiting outside for some time.

After much discussion, they decided that there was no way to change what had already been announced. In accordance with the sect rules, they would allow Bai Xiaochun to keep that position.

“Prestige disciple?” Bai Xiaochun asked, looking shocked. He had

never heard of any such title before, so he simply stood there, looking blankly at the Sect Leader and the other Senior sect members. Although all of them had strange expressions on their faces, they didn't say anything else regarding a reward.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold back from asking, "Uh... that's it?"

"That's it," replied the Sect Leader, smiling.

Bai Xiaochun instantly started to get nervous, and then prepared to start explaining how difficult the journey had been, how many times he had almost died. Before he could start, Li Qinghou, who knew Bai Xiaochun better than anyone, cleared his throat and said, "Hurry up and thank the Sect Leader. The title of Prestige disciple has only been given out ten times throughout the history of the Spirit Stream Sect. You are the only person to get it within the past thousand years.

"As the Prestige disciple, you rank higher than the Inner Sect, and have the most prestigious glory in the entire Spirit Stream Sect. Your descendants will all have special access to sect resources, and will be Inner Sect disciples from birth. The Spirit Stream Sect will protect your bloodline for all eternity!

"Currently, there are nine great clans who are part of the Spirit Stream Sect, and all of them are Prestige clans. It's a truly glorious and honorable position."

When Bai Xiaochun heard the explanation, a somewhat sad expression appeared on his face. His spirits suddenly sank, and he

looked miserably at Li Qinghou, then back at the Sect Leader.

He wasn't sure what to say. Although the position of Prestige disciple seemed incredible, the truth was that it had been created for the descendants of people who had died. But he was still alive.... Sadly, Bai Xiaochun was now in the unfortunate position of being jealous of his own progeny.

“Thanks... Sect Leader....” he said sadly, lacking the energy to even speak.

Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong cleared his throat awkwardly. “From this day on, you may address me as Elder Brother Sect Leader.”

The matter of having Bai Xiaochun become the apprentice of his own master had been made because he assumed Bai Xiaochun had sacrificed his life. But now that he was alive, it led to a very awkward situation. The Sect Leader, despite having many years of life under his belt, would now have a twenty-year-old kid calling him Elder Brother. He couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

“Really?” Bai Xiaochun asked, his eyes widening. All of a sudden, he felt much, much better. He had entered the temple hall with high expectations, only to have them cruelly crushed. That led to him being in a horrible mood. But now, things had changed.

“Based on the meritorious service you performed, and considering that you had no formal Master, I took the responsibility to accept you as an apprentice of my own Master.

Therefore, from now on you can call me Elder Brother.” The Sect Leader couldn’t feel more awkward.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and his eyes filled with excitement. He suddenly was filled with the sensation that the sect truly had treated him well. The Sect Leader’s Master would most definitely be ranked as a Prime Elder in the sect, which caused Bai Xiaochun’s eyes to radiate with excitement.

“From now on,” he thought, “nobody will dare to bully me, not with an awesome Master like that! Hahaha!!” Heart leaping with joy, he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Many thanks, Elder Brother Sect Leader,” he said, sounding elated. “Elder Brother Sect Leader, where exactly is our Master? I would love to go pay my respects.”

A strange expression could be seen on the Sect Leader’s face as he slowly said, “There’s no hurry in that. There was a portrait made of him before he passed away in meditation, which was enshrined on the back side of the mountain. I’ve already made arrangements for some people to escort you over there shortly.”

Bai Xiaochun felt as if he were being struck by lightning. “Passed away in meditation.... Enshrined on the back side of the mountain....”

His jaw dropped as the words he had just spoken echoed in his mind. After a long moment, he pulled himself together.... The Master he had become apprenticed to... had already passed away.



“I....” Bai Xiaochun was now starting to seethe with anger, and his mind was buzzing. Once again his heart sank, and he wanted to cry, although no tears would come. It was in a virtual daze that he allowed himself to be led to the rear of the mountain, where he paid formal respects to the portrait of his Master. Afterward, he left Mount Daoseed and returned to Fragrant Cloud Peak.

On Fragrant Cloud Peak, numerous disciples hurried over to offer greetings. Curious expressions could be seen in their eyes, and someone even kindly took him over to look at his own gravestone.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the gravestone, everything seemed to go black.

Eventually, he found himself back in his courtyard, sitting blankly in his log cabin, rage building up within him. “I... I became the apprentice of a painting....”

Several days later, he was still there, looking miserable. Half a month passed before he managed to collect himself.

Sighing miserably, he left his residence to look for Big Fatty Zhang, to reminisce about the past. However, as soon as he walked out, he ran into an Outer Sect disciple who instantly clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Greetings, Sect Uncle Bai.”

Bai Xiaochun took a few more steps, then stopped and turned around, eyes shining as he grabbed the Outer Sect disciple and pulled him forward.

“What did you just call me?”

“Sect Uncle Bai!” the Outer Sect disciple instantly replied. “Sir, you’re the Junior Brother of the Sect Leader. D-disciple would naturally call you Elder Uncle Bai!”

Bai Xiaochun’s fists loosened, and his eyes began to shine even more brightly. His heart also started pounding. This new status of his wasn’t all that bad after all. He had a terrifying level of seniority....

Licking his lips, he began to laugh, which frightened the Outer Sect disciple so much that he started to edge backward, unsure of what madness had struck Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun suddenly stopped laughing. Clearing his throat, he put on the air of a Senior sect member and nodded slightly at the Outer Sect disciple. Instead of going to look for Big Fatty Zhang, it was with keen anticipation that he headed toward the Missions Office.

Because... that was where the most people would be.

Meanwhile, Li Qinghou had returned to Fragrant Cloud Peak, and was in secluded meditation. After seating himself cross-legged,

he thought for a bit, and then waved his sleeve. Expression serious, he began to concoct pills.

“Xiaochun is stubborn and mischievous. I need to prepare a life-saving magical item for him. Unfortunately, I’m not very good at equipment forging, but I can make a batch of Nine Ultimates Pills to trade with the Pill Stream Sect.... When they find out I’m preparing a magical item for a Qi Condensation disciple, and a younger relative at that, they’ll definitely rip me off.” Li Qinghou shook his head, but didn’t mind. In order to concoct Nine Ultimates Pills, he would have to use some of his own heart-blood, but when he thought about how close Bai Xiaochun had come to dying, he settled his qi, cleared his mind, and began preparations to start concocting.

## Chapter 68: Sect Nephew, Don't Rush Off!

---

Bai Xiaochun was the type of person who liked to find the fun in anything.... Now that he had discovered the joy in being the Junior Brother of the Sect Leader, he couldn't be more happy. He strutted along the mountain paths of the sect until he saw the Missions Office off in the distance.

Clearing his throat, he straightened his garments and assumed the air of a Senior member of the sect. Sticking his chin out, he clasped his hands behind his back and sauntered forward.

The Missions Office was one of the busiest places in the sect, and today it was as packed as usual. The clamor of Outer Sect disciples coming and going could be heard from quite a distance away.

When Bai Xiaochun arrived, he stood there with a benevolent smile on his face, looking around at all the Outer Sect disciples.

Almost as soon as he appeared, people noticed, and the disciples nearest to him, who were in the middle of discussing various mission-related topics, suddenly gaped.

“That's... that's Sect Uncle Bai! Greetings, Sect Uncle Bai!”

Clasping hands in his direction, they called out, “Greetings, Sect Uncle Bai!”

After hearing them, more people looked over, and soon, virtually

all of the Outer Sect disciples in the area were clasping hands in greeting.

Bursting with joy at hearing everyone call him Sect Uncle Bai, he strode forward, smiling, hands clasped behind his back as he said, “Keep up the good work, everyone.”

The surrounding disciples looked at him enviously and began to murmur among themselves.

“Wow, Sect Uncle Bai is the Sect Leader’s Junior Brother....”

There were a few Honor Guards stationed at the Missions Office, and when they saw Bai Xiaochun walking up, they hastily rose to their feet and clasped hands in greeting. Virtually the entire Missions Office lurched to a halt as everyone turned to look. Bai Xiaochun was only getting more exciting.

“Carry on, everyone,” he said. “There’s no need to worry about me. I’m just here on behalf of Elder Brother Sect Leader to inspect the Outer Sect disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect.” Happiness blossomed in the depths of his heart. In response to his words, the surrounding disciples once again clasped hands, and even the Elders from the Missions Office came out and nodded politely to him.

However... although Bai Xiaochun had clearly told them not to pay him any heed, he didn’t leave. He strolled through the crowd, nodding to those he recognized and reveling in their calls of ‘Sect Uncle Bai.’ Some of the disciples even said it ten times....

Soon, strange looks appeared on their faces as they realized that apparently, Bai Xiaochun had actually come to hear them call him Sect Uncle Bai.... In the end, he decided not to push things too far. Waving at everyone, he swaggered away, and soon the Missions Office returned to its normal state of affairs.

“What an awesome status,” he thought, his eyes shining. Not only did he feel incredibly happy, most importantly, he could tell that his status was vastly removed from everyone else.

“Prestige disciple. Junior Brother of the Sect Leader. Might as well just say that nobody in the sect will ever dare to provoke me, right?” Having reached this point in his train of thoughts, Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily and hurried off in the direction of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion.

The 10,000 Medicines Pavilion... was also packed.

It didn't take long for him to get there, and when he did, he looked up at the ten stone steles and listened to everyone call him Sect Uncle Bai. He stood there for quite a while, sighing, until strange expressions began to appear on the faces of the disciples. Reluctantly, he left. By that time, evening was falling, but he didn't feel tired at all, and went over to one of the locations where a lot of Outer Sect disciples resided.

Xu Baocai had just stepped out, and when he saw Bai Xiaochun, he immediately clasped hands.

Bai Xiaochun thumped Xu Baocai on the shoulder and then spoke in a wise, reprimanding tone. “Ah, it’s you, Little Treasure! After all the time I’ve been gone, you haven’t made much progress with your cultivation base! We can’t have that! You need to work hard at your cultivation!”

Xu Baocai’s jaw dropped, and he blinked. His heart trembled a bit after hearing Bai Xiaochun call him ‘[Little Treasure](#)’. At this age, only his father would call him something like that, and even then, only in private. Despite feeling a bit odd, he didn’t dare to say anything, and merely nodded in assent.

The “Bao” in Xu Baocai’s name means “treasure,” and “Little Treasure” sounds like the nickname of a child

“I... um, I mean, as an important person like myself...” Bai Xiaochun suddenly realized that with a position like his, it would be improper to simply refer to himself as “I”, and so he decided to try to make himself sound like an important person, like Li Qinghou. He cleared his throat. Clasp ing his hands behind his back, he stuck his jaw out and said, “As an important person like myself, I’m not very familiar with this area. Could you show me around a bit?”

Xu Baocai had no choice but to immediately begin to show Bai Xiaochun around.

More and more disciples were returning home, and when they caught sight Bai Xiaochun, they looked a bit surprised. Many of them had already seen him earlier at the Missions Office and the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion. Seeing him here caused them to exchange quizzical glances. However, they had no other option

than to clasp hands and offer greetings.

Bai Xiaochun once again revelled in the glory of this status. Joy surged in his heart at the sight of one Outer Sect disciple after another offering greetings. It was late at night before he finally left, feeling very pleased with himself.

As he walked along, he saw the Spirit Tail Chicken farm, and decided to stop by. Before long, calls of ‘Sect Uncle Bai’ could be heard. When he left, he held two Spirit Tail Chickens in his hands.

“Ah, the perks of having status. When I wanted to eat chickens before, I had to steal them. Now I can just take them openly. Who would dare to provoke me now, huh? My Elder Brother is the Sect Leader!” Bai Xiaochun hummed a little tune as he strolled back to his residence, emanating an air of pride and complacency.

Early the next morning, when the sun had just risen, Bai Xiaochun crawled out of bed, feeling in very high spirits. Straightening his clothes, he looked at himself in his copper mirror and selected the best pose he could come up with, then stepped out.

Then he went about doing things in a very serious way, as if it were... his job....

He didn’t go to the Missions Office, but instead, visited many other locations on Fragrant Cloud Peak. He even went to watch the fighting competition....



Throughout the day, he heard countless people call him Sect Uncle Bai. To him, it was almost as if he had become an Immortal. His spirits were so high he nearly burst. And then... the third day arrived. Then the fourth, and the fifth....

He strolled around the sect for more than ten days in a row. By that point, virtually all of the Outer Sect disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak had called him Sect Uncle Bai, and were on the verge of going crazy. To call a kid like him Sect Uncle might be fine if it only happened once. But the more they had to call it out, the worse they felt.

Bai Xiaochun's days were long and fulfilling, and he especially liked it when he ran into people he knew. He would quickly hurry over and call out a greeting....

One day he saw Zhao Yiduo. Eyes shining, he hurried over and grabbed his arm and said, "Sect Nephew Yiduo, long time no see! Don't rush off!"

When Zhao Yiduo heard the term 'Sect Nephew', his face twitched. "Sect Uncle Bai, we've... we've run into each other several times in the past few days...."

Bai Xiaochun blinked, then cleared his throat. It was at that point that he saw someone else nearby, someone who had noticed him and was just turning to leave.

"Eee?" he said. "Sect Nephew Zi'ang, long time no see!" He quickly released Zhao Yiduo and hurried over to stand in front of

Chen Zi'ang, face beaming.

Chen Zi'ang seemed to be on the verge of going mad. He had run into Bai Xiaochun every day recently, usually at least three times.... From what he had heard, it was the same with everyone who personally knew Bai Xiaochun. The person who had it worst of all was an unlucky fellow who called himself Lord Wolf, who supposedly was visited by Bai Xiaochun dozens of times per day....

“Sect Uncle Bai, uh... I have something to take care of, I have to run.” Chen Zi'ang promptly fled as though his life depended on it.

Ten days later, the Outer Sect disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak had begun to pretend not to notice Bai Xiaochun. That of course left him less than pleased, and forced him to take the initiative more often.

Bai Xiaochun grabbed one of Zhou Xinqi's former fans and said, “Aiya! You seem so familiar! Come, come, as an important person like myself, I sometimes forget things. Have we met already?”

The disciple looked downright wretched as Bai Xiaochun began to chat with him. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, and after the disciple had called him Sect Uncle Bai more than thirty times, Bai Xiaochun finally seemed pleased, and allowed the miserable-looking disciple to leave.

However, such a strategy wasn't really viable long-term. After realizing that everyone was avoiding him, he decided that he needed to take more initiative. In the following days, he would

frequently clear his throat to alert people to his presence.

The results were only average, leaving Bai Xiaochun feeling quite down. Thankfully, there was another girl besides Du Lingfei whom Bai Xiaochun found quite charming.

It was Hou Xiaomei, who would take the initiative to come find him every day. There was no need for him to clear his throat; she was so enthusiastic she could hardly stand still in front of him, and would follow him around fawningly and call him Sect Uncle.

The other Outer Sect disciples felt a bit sick when they saw that, but Bai Xiaochun was delighted. Some time ago, Bai Xiaochun had provided her with some education regarding the mysterious little turtle of Fragrant Cloud Peak. She still adored the little turtle, and on one occasion when she was walking around with Bai Xiaochun, she asked him what he thought of the little turtle.

“The little turtle? He’s mysterious and unfathomable. He is naturally talented, and in the 10,000 year history of the Spirit Stream Sect, he is a rarely-seen, grandiose figure. He’s like a white cloud in a clear sky, someone that everyone can look up to!” In the end, he coughed dryly. After uttering such grandiose words, Bai Xiaochun had to work hard not to just blurt out to Hou Xiaomei that he was the little turtle. However, he was still determined to find a time when he was the focus of all attention to tell Hou Xiaomei about his grand identity.

“I feel the same way,” Hou Xiaomei responded, eyes glittering brightly. “I’ve told a lot of people that the little turtle is oblivious to material rewards. He pursues the Dao of medicine, and does not

worry himself with worldly matters. He's definitely like a white cloud in a clear sky."

For a while, there had been a lot of rumors that Bai Xiaochun was the little turtle. However, those rumors had eventually been refuted. Everyone had an idea of what they thought the little turtle looked like, and it definitely wasn't Bai Xiaochun.

The fact that Hou Xiaomei responded in such a way didn't really register to Bai Xiaochun. He was currently thinking about one of the top five beauties of the south bank, Zhou Xinqi.

"I wonder what it would be like to hear a proud Chosen like Zhou Xinqi call me Sect Uncle?" he thought. The mere idea got him excited, and from that day on, he began to search relentlessly for Zhou Xinqi.

As the saying goes, everything comes to him who waits. One day, he looked up and happened to see Zhou Xinqi soaring through the air on her blue flying silk.

"Sect Niece Xinqi!!" he shouted.

Zhou Xinqi's face twisted into an unsightly expression. She had heard about what Bai Xiaochun had been doing during the past month, and knew that all of the Outer Sect disciples had been talking about the matter in fearful tones. When the words "Sect Niece Xinqi" entered her ears, goosebumps sprang up all over her body. She immediately pretended as if she hadn't heard him and proceeded along her way. However, how could she have

imagined... that Bai Xiaochun would stubbornly run along beneath her, crying out at the top of his lungs.

“Sect Niece Xinqi, come on, have a chat with your Sect Uncle about life!” He was actually bursting with excitement; he had been looking for Zhou Xinqi for quite some time, and having finally run into her, there was no way he would simply give up.

Zhou Xinqi gritted her teeth and picked up speed. It was only by leaving Fragrant Cloud Peak that she was finally able to shake him.

Bai Xiaochun watched as she flew away, and sighed with regret.

“Ah it doesn’t matter. You can fly, but I’ll be able to fly eventually too. One of these days, I’ll get you to call me Sect Uncle Bai.” Feeling a bit depressed, he looked up at the darkening sky and then went to look for Du Lingfei.

As soon as she saw him coming, she covered her mouth with her hand as she laughed. “Sect Uncle Bai, Sect Uncle Bai, Sect Uncle Bai....”

Bai Xiaochun’s spirits instantly soared because of Du Lingfei’s charmingness. A few days before, one of the sect Elders had taken her as an apprentice because of the services she had rendered. Then she had been assigned to Eastwood City to serve as the Spirit Stream Sect’s Honor Guard there. It was a great opportunity for Du Lingfei; after spending a few years in Eastwood City, considering her past experience and meritorious service, she would be directly promoted into the Inner Sect.

Furthermore, she would have lot of authority in Eastwood City, and access to even more abundant cultivation resources than were available in the main sect.

Bai Xiaochun sighed with regret as he saw her off. Then he continued to wander around Fragrant Cloud Peak looking for interesting things to do.

Time passed. A month later, the words ‘Sect Uncle Bai’ had become somewhat taboo. Whenever anyone thought of them, they would laugh bitterly.

By that point, Bai Xiaochun finally came to the conclusion that it was time to call an end to the matter.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, am the Junior Brother of the Spirit Stream Sect’s Sect Leader. I am the Sect Uncle to all disciples, not just the disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak. I can’t discriminate against the other mountain peaks. I need to go visit them too.” After a bit of thought, he decided that it truly was the right thing to do. Thus, he headed toward Violet Cauldron Peak.

## Chapter 69: Bai Xiaochun, Come Offer Greetings To The Young Lord

---

One month later, the Outer Sect disciples on Violet Cauldron Peak were about to go crazy. Bai Xiaochun had virtually made a career out of being a Sect Uncle, and everyone there knew it.

They quickly came to find that it didn't matter where they went, they were likely to run into a very pure and fair young man, slender, with a certain proud look on his face that he tried to cover up, but was unable to. As he swaggered along, he would loudly clear his throat whenever he encountered another disciple, and if they pretended they didn't recognize him, he would immediately introduce himself.

Their throats began to go hoarse from speaking the words 'Sect Uncle Bai', and yet... they had no choice but to continue doing so. After all, Bai Xiaochun was the Junior Brother of the sect leader, and in terms of seniority, he outranked everyone. Any disciple who dared to offend him was essentially violating sect rules.

Eventually, people went to Big Fatty Zhang to ask for help. In turn, he made a huge fanfare about seeing Bai Xiaochun off... to visit Green Crest Peak.

Another month passed, and the disciples of Green Crest Peak... were also driven crazy.

That was especially true of Chen Fei and his two friends, who were soon frightened out of their minds. Once Bai Xiaochun began

to do the rounds at Green Crest Peak, he would frequently look for them. Despite the fact that they would instantly begin to blabber greetings to ‘Sect Uncle Bai’, that didn’t end things.

Bai Xiaochun was quick to nitpick, and if they showed even an iota of disrespect, he would imply that he would report them to the Hall of Justice. Chen Fei and his friends began to shake with fear, and were soon treading on thin ice no matter where they went. In the end, they finally ratted out Qian Dajin. After giving them another good thrashing, Bai Xiaochun finally let them off the hook. Sighing, he left Green Crest Peak, all the while blaming himself for what was going on.

“The Outer Sect disciples all know me, but I haven’t had a chance to meet any of the Inner Sect disciples. And then there’s Qian Dajin. Does he really think I’ve forgotten about him?” After a long moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun nodded deeply at the prospect of the immense pleasure he was about to experience. With that, he hurried off to find some Inner Sect disciples.

In the following days, Bai Xiaochun made appearances on all three of the mountain peaks, most of the time in the areas occupied by the Inner Sect disciples. Considering his status, he could go almost anywhere in the Spirit Stream Sect.

However, he quickly lost interest. The Inner Sect disciples all happened to be in secluded meditation, and he hardly saw a single one even after a few months passed. That was especially true of Qian Dajin, whose immortal’s cave was constantly under the protection of several spell formations.



“I refuse to believe this just a coincidence!” Bai Xiaochun thought as he stood there in front of Qian Dajin’s door. He tried to break through the spell formations, but considering they were there to protect the immortal’s cave of an Inner Sect disciple, they were simply too powerful. Seeing that it was impossible for him to succeed on his own, he decided that it would be best to go get some help in breaking them open.

However, it was at this point that two people appeared off in the distance, racing in his direction. They were Inner Sect disciples, one tall, one short, and as they closed in, they didn’t even make a show of clasping their hands in greeting.

The first one to speak was the tall one. Voice cool, he said, “Sect Uncle Bai, how about you give my clan’s Young Lord a bit of face and forget about what happened with Qian Dajin? Oh, by the way, that Young Lord is none other than Shangguan Tianyou.”

From the young man’s tone of voice, he made it clear what he expected Bai Xiaochun to do.

Shangguan Tianyou was the most respected among the three great Chosen of the three mountain peaks of the south bank!

Latent talent such as his had been rare for at least a thousand years on the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect, and although he was only an Outer Sect disciple, there was no question that he would soon reach Foundation Establishment. Because of that, many of the elders in the sect viewed Shangguan Tianyou as being a bit different from everyone else. Many people even hoped that he would eventually be able to outdo the disciples of the north bank,

and as such, a lot of resources were being put into his training.

That in turn caused Shangguan Tianyou to have a lot of fans, especially on Green Crest Peak.

Bai Xiaochun's expression was the same as ever. In the past, he might have started to get scared. However, his general fear of death did not indicate that he lacked courage. In fact, as long as a situation didn't carry the threat of death, he was actually quite dauntless.

Because of his current status, there was virtually nothing and no one in the sect who could threaten his life, and therefore, he simply turned his nose up and stared at the two newcomers with a slight smile.

“When you meet an important person like me, but fail to offer formal greetings, it shows what great gall the two of you have, doesn't it?” He flicked his sleeve. “Who might it be that egged you on into such impertinent disrespect? Might it have been Shangguan Tianyou?”

The two Inner Sect disciples' expressions flickered, and the tall one's gaze turned sharp as he stared at Bai Xiaochun.

“Sect Uncle Bai,” he said, “you'd do best to pick your words a bit more carefully.”

Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, and before he could

continue speaking, Bai Xiaochun suddenly vanished. A blast of wind swept across the Inner Sect disciple, who stared in shock as Bai Xiaochun appeared directly in front of him.

His speed was so incredible that the two Inner Sect disciples hadn't even seen him move. Before they could react, Bai Xiaochun stretched his palm back and swept it toward the tall disciple's face, causing a sound like thunder to rumble out.

Almost instantly, a protective shield sprang up from within the young man's robe, the result of a magical device given to all Inner Sect disciples. However, in almost the same instant that the shield appeared, Bai Xiaochun's palm landed, and it shattered into a thousand pieces. It was completely incapable of standing up to the incredible power of Bai Xiaochun's palm.

A massive slap rang out, and the tall disciple instantly saw stars. His mind thrummed, and he almost felt like he had been crushed by a mountain. Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he slammed into the ground, tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut. After rolling along for several dozen meters, shrieking the entire way, he finally lapsed into unconsciousness.

Everything happened so quickly that the short disciple could do nothing more than stand there, mouth agape, mind spinning. After a moment, he began to edge backward, glancing first at his unconscious comrade and then back at Bai Xiaochun. Then he took a deep breath, and swallowed hard.

"Y-you... you...." he stammered, pointing shakily at Bai Xiaochun. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined

that Bai Xiaochun's fleshly body power would be so shocking.

It seemed on par with the eighth level of Qi Condensation....

Bai Xiaochun turned slowly to look at the short disciple, and then said, "Can an Inner Sect disciple really gesture so rudely to someone of the elder generation?"

Then he began to walk forward.

Shrieking, the short disciple turned tail and fled. However, before he could get very far, the sound of a screaming wind filled the air as Bai Xiaochun bore down on him and once again unleashed a mighty slap.

It was at that very moment that a stern, sinister voice rang out from down below.

"Stay your hand!" Suddenly, a newcomer appeared on the scene.

However, Bai Xiaochun paid him no heed. His palm moved too quickly, and the short Inner Sect disciple was sent flying. Teeth spun through the air, and blood spattered. The disciple's neck seemed to be on the verge of breaking as he flew off to the side, unconscious.

With that, Bai Xiaochun shook out his hand and looked at the person racing up from further down the mountain. It was a middle-aged man with a cultivation base in the ninth level of Qi

Condensation, a level of power similar to Chen Heng.

The man glared furiously at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Didn’t you hear what I just said, Bai Xiaochun? Dammit! You’re–”

Bai Xiaochun lifted his chin, smiled, and interrupted, “Sect Nephew, are you looking to get slapped as well?”

From the actions of the two disciples moments ago, as well as this man’s words, it was clear that they didn’t have the least bit of respect for him, and furthermore, even disdained him to some degree, as though they felt that they completely outranked him. Inner Sect disciples like that were completely contemptible as far as he was concerned.

Bai Xiaochun’s words caused various expressions to flash across the man’s face, and he bit back his next words. Bai Xiaochun’s impressive display of fleshly body strength left him breathless and in complete shock. Now that the man thought about it, he realized that, considering Bai Xiaochun’s status, it didn’t matter what he did here, the Hall of Justice wouldn’t care a bit.

The middle-aged man stared at Bai Xiaochun for a long moment, suppressed his fury, and then explained his purpose in coming. “Bai Xiaochun, my clan’s Young Lord wishes for you to go offer him formal greetings.”

He had actually been sent by Shangguan Tianyou to order Bai Xiaochun go offer formal greetings.

In his opinion, his clan's Young Lord was making a mountain out of a molehill. Bai Xiaochun had lucked his way into being an important person, and was more of a clown than anything else. He had killed a few weak members of some cultivator clan, and it was only by chance that the sect ended up making a big deal about him. That certainly didn't earn him the right to be given face by a Young Lord who was already making his meteoric rise, and would certainly reach the Gold Core stage and forge a legend in the future.

In fact, this man actually felt that being sent to fetch Bai Xiaochun to come offer greetings was a bit below his status.

Bai Xiaochun could already see how arrogant of a person Shangguan Tianyou was. Considering his own status, if he didn't come in person, or if he chose to just send a message, it might be acceptable. But instead, he actually wanted Bai Xiaochun to go visit him! "Even if he's a Chosen, do you really think an Outer Sect disciple can order me to offer him greetings? He should be the one coming to greet me!"

The middle-aged man flicked his sleeve, sending out a blast of wind. "Bai Xiaochun," he grated furiously, "for my clan's Young Lord to ask you to go visit him is a huge show of face. Do you know how many people wish they could go offer formal greetings? You—"

Before he could finish speaking, his face flickered, and he leaped backward. However, he was just a bit too slow. Bai Xiaochun appeared directly in front of him and reached back his palm.

"How dare you!!" The man's cultivation base was in the ninth

level of Qi Condensation, and he unleashed all of its power, simultaneously performing an incantation gesture that summoned numerous wind blades. However, even as the wind blades appeared in front of him, Bai Xiaochun's palm smashed into them, crushing them like twigs. They couldn't provide even the slightest bit of protection.

The palm proceeded onward almost as if nothing had attempted to block its way, landing almost instantly on the man's face.

A slapping sound echoed out, followed by a scream. The middle-aged man staggered backward thirty meters or more before finally lurching to a stop.

With that, Bai Xiaochun swished his sleeve and snorted arrogantly. "You're not even as powerful as Chen Heng. No wonder you're such a lackey! Screw off!"

The man looked back at Bai Xiaochun in astonishment. He was shaking visibly, and his cheek was already swelling up. Blood oozing from between his teeth, he quickly fled.

After the man left, Bai Xiaochun looked back toward Qian Dajin's immortal's cave with narrowed eyes. He was the type of person who feared death, and as such, if someone tried to kill him, he would seek revenge upon them no matter what.

It didn't matter if Qian Dajin asked for help from Shangguan Tianyou, there was no possible way Bai Xiaochun would let him off the hook. Although Bai Xiaochun's actions in the sect recently had

seemed somewhat casual, he had actually long since carried out a thorough investigation about Qian Dajin.

“You think you can hide away in there?” he thought. “You think I have no way of making you show your face?” With a cold snort, he turned to leave.

Based on his current status, what happened next was no surprise. A jade slip from the Hall of Justice appeared, a mission. It took only a moment for it to pass into Qian Dajin’s immortal’s cave, and hover in the air in front of him.

It was just like what had happened with Bai Xiaochun. Qian Dajin was being forced to accept a very dangerous mission outside the sect. A bitter smile appeared on his face, as he realized that he had no choice but to emerge from hiding to carry out the mission.... However, he still clung to the hope that being outside of the sect might help him avoid catastrophe.

Unfortunately, he had underestimated the lengths to which Bai Xiaochun would go to exact his revenge. He had already arranged for several such missions to be assigned to Qian Dajin. Furthermore, he’d asked for some help from Hou Yunfei. The Hou Clan had a Foundation Establishment patriarch, and access to other deep reserves. Considering how important Bai Xiaochun was to them, and coupled with the urgings of Hou Yunfei and Hou Xiaomei, they had become a powerful ally.

With the help of the Hou Clan, it was a foreordained certainty that Qian Dajin would be struck with misfortune during the course of trying to carry out the missions.



It wasn't that the Hall of Justice was unaware of what had occurred with Qian Dajin, and how it led to Bai Xiaochun's fall in combat. However, despite the fact that the news was never spread publically, internal records had been maintained.

Now that Bai Xiaochun was back and wanted to settle accounts, there was little they could do to stop him. In fact, it was almost as if they owed him, and were simply allowing him to do what he wanted. To top it off, there were even some people who had already come to view Qian Dajin as dead.

# Chapter 70: Hey, Elder Brother Li

---

In a certain location near the summit of Green Crest Peak was a solitary little path. At the end of that path was a pool of water, within which swam several golden-colored fish.

Next to the pond was an immortal's cave. It was a somewhat remote and isolated place, very quiet, with abundant spiritual energy that clearly exceeded anything else nearby.

On the bank of the pond sat a young man. He wore the long robe of an Outer Sect disciple, and was exceedingly good-looking, with long black hair, fair skin, and a refined, intelligent air.

He was the type of young man that female disciples would sigh over constantly, whose phoenix-like eyes were delicate, and yet glistened with flickering light. Overall, he seemed completely unique.

He currently held a fishing rod, which he would occasionally cast out into the pond, whereupon the fish would voraciously compete to gobble up the food attached to the end of the line.

The middle-aged man who Bai Xiaochun had just slapped was hurrying up the path, face ashen. When he reached the end, he slowed down and respectfully clasped hands and bowed to the young man.

“Greetings, Young Lord,” he said through gritted teeth. “Young Lord, Bai Xiaochun doesn’t know how to appreciate favors. I

carefully relayed your message, but instead of coming to offer greetings, he acted bossy and domineering. He thinks he can simply throw his weight around with impunity!”

The young man looked over, his expression seemingly ambivalent. “Well,” he said coolly, “forget about it then. He’s a nobody. It was mostly just on a whim that I thought to have him come offer greetings.”

The man nodded. “I think I understand what you mean, Young Lord. The reason he’s a nobody is that the position of Prestige disciple is only given to dead people, right? Plus, being the Junior Brother of the Sect Leader is a complete joke. In fact, his Master is actually a corpse.” The man chuckled coldly for a moment, but then shivered as he realized that the young man was staring at him with an icy expression. All of a sudden, the middle-aged man was struck with fear. “Young... Young Lord....”

“It’s true that he’s a nobody,” the young man said, “not even worth paying attention to. However, the Sect Leader’s Master is a former patriarch of our sect. Do you really think you qualify to even mention him? Go to the Frigid Abyss and slap yourself for three months straight as punishment.” With that, the young man looked away and continued to feed his golden fish.

Trembling, the middle-aged man nodded in assent and quickly took his leave.

Having settled the issue of Qian Dajin, Bai Xiaochun returned to Fragrant Cloud Peak. He wasn't worried at all about Shangguan Tianyou. Considering the meritorious service he had performed for the sect, unless he turned traitor, his life wouldn't be in danger at all.

As time passed, he lost some of his excitement over being called Sect Uncle, especially considering that most people avoided him at all costs. In fact, he actually came to feel a bit melancholy. However, one day he happened to wander into the scripture pavilion, whereupon his spirits were lifted almost instantly.

He found that as soon as he arrived, he was immediately granted a reading space alongside the lecturing elders, where he could look down upon the countless disciples in attendance.

He fell in love with the experience almost immediately, after which he came to frequent the mountaintop sermon pavilion.

There he would sit, occasionally giving a smile and a nod to disciples down below, eyes sparkling with satisfaction. He looked very much like the Foundation Establishment elders whom he sat next to.

The Foundation Establishment elders didn't know whether to laugh or cry, and as for the disciples from the various mountain peaks, their spirits couldn't be lower, but they had no choice but to simply stare up angrily at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun had found a new way to flaunt his status as the

Junior Brother of the sect leader.

When he came into the presence of the Foundation Establishment cultivators, he would immediately call them Elder Brother and Elder Sister. Although they didn't say anything in response, strange expressions could be seen on their faces, and any nearby disciples would eventually be forced to utter the words 'Sect Uncle Bai'.

Things went on like that for some time until one day, Bai Xiaochun happened to run into Li Qinghou. Unable to restrain himself, Bai Xiaochun immediately cried out in an amiable tone, "Hey, Elder Brother Li."

Li Qinghou looked a bit haggard. He had been working this entire time on concocting the Nine Ultimates Pill, and was currently on his way out of the sect. As soon as the words entered his ears, his jaw dropped, and he looked around until his gaze came to fall on Bai Xiaochun. Then, his cheek twitched. Although he had been spending all his time on pill-concocting lately, he had heard about Bai Xiaochun's antics, which had turned into quite a headache. To hear Bai Xiaochun addressing him in such a fashion left Li Qinghou glaring in shock.

As soon as the words left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun regretted speaking them. Seeing Li Qinghou's reaction then caused him to suck in a breath. After all, Li Qinghou was the person he feared most in the entire sect.

Grimacing, he shivered and quickly said, "Uncle Li... er... my mistake."

However, there was really nothing Li Qinghou could do, and he knew it. Glaring even harder at Bai Xiaochun, he decided to rebuke him a bit for his recent behavior.

“I’m leaving the sect for a bit,” he said. “At the soonest, I’ll be back in a few months; at the most, a year. Don’t even think of fooling around while I’m gone. Work hard at your cultivation.” After a few more words of exhortation, he turned and left.

Bai Xiaochun let out a long sigh of relief as Li Qinghou made his way off into the distance. A glimmer of fear could be seen in his eyes, but at the same time, a bit of warmth and respect for one of his elders could also be seen. He couldn’t help but remember what Du Lingfei said about the time he had gone missing, and how Li Qinghou had spent two months searching for him on his own. Upon his return, Li Qinghou had been in quite a sorry state, and seemed to blame himself for what had happened.

After Bai Xiaochun’s father and mother fell sick and died, he hadn’t shown such warmth and respect to anyone. At some point, though, he had come to view Li Qinghou as one of his own relatives.

Because of Li Qinghou’s admonition, Bai Xiaochun changed his ways for about half a month. During that time, he ceased clearing his throat to attract attention, and instead focused his attention on Zhou Xinqi’s immortal’s cave. In all of the sect, she was the only person who knew him personally but refused to call him Sect Uncle Bai.

After a few months passed, he started to get a bit depressed. After all, he could only catch sight of Zhou Xinqi whizzing around on her blue flying silk. Considering that he was incapable of flight, it didn't matter how much he chased after her, he could only watch in dismay as she flew away.

“There are probably only a few magical devices in the whole sect that Qi Condensation disciples can use to fly. Without a special technique like the one that Chen Heng used, the only way to fly is to get one of those magical devices.

“It's so unfair! My Master should have gifted me with such an item. My... my Master....” Sighing, he walked along for a bit more before suddenly stopping in his tracks. Looking up in thought for a moment, he suddenly turned and headed toward Mount Daoseed.

As the Junior Brother of the Sect Leader, he had unrestricted access to Mount Daoseed, and before long, there he was at the top of the mountain, where Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong's grand hall was located.

Swaggering in, Bai Xiaochun called out, “Elder Brother Sect Leader, oh dear Elder Brother Sect Leader!! I want to go offer incense to my Master!”

Zheng Yuandong sat there in the hall cross-legged in meditation. As soon as he heard Bai Xiaochun's voice, he sighed.

In recent days, so many people had come to visit him that he had lost count. He had heard all about Bai Xiaochun's doings, and had

long since come to regret the situation. Unfortunately, as the old saying went, the timber had already been crafted into a boat, and there was little to be done. After all, despite Bai Xiaochun's peculiar preoccupations, he wasn't doing anything to hurt anyone.

Hearing Bai Xiaochun continue to call out to him, Zheng Yuandong slowly rose to his feet, cleared his throat, and looked over solemnly.

“Calm down, I heard you.”

Looking very charming, Bai Xiaochun hurried over and clasped hands in greeting. “Junior Brother offers greetings, Elder Brother Sect Leader.”

Zheng Yuandong sighed inwardly. Although he knew what was going on, he couldn't help but shake his head and smile wryly as he led Bai Xiaochun into the restricted area behind the mountain.

In the immortal's cave in that area, a portrait was hung on the wall depicting a middle-aged man. The man smiled faintly as he looked off into the distance, emanating a unique aura that made his image look quite lifelike.

Beneath the portrait was a small tribute altar, upon which could be seen some spirit fruits and spirit candles. The immortal's cave was simple but elegant, and filled one with a sense of incredible dignity.



As soon as Bai Xiaochun entered, he hurried over to the portrait and plopped down into a kneeling position. Then he began to kowtow deeply, touching the floor with his forehead nine times, his expression very solemn.

Finally, he looked up at the portrait, his eyes radiating pious sincerity. “Master, apprentice has come to pay respects.”

Zheng Yuandong stood off to the side looking on. Although he knew Bai Xiaochun was stubborn and mischievous, he also could tell that he had a filial heart. Considering Zheng Yuandong’s experience in life, he was able to tell from Bai Xiaochun’s expression that the pious sincerity was real, and not an act.

But then... Bai Xiaochun continued to speak.

“Master, your apprentice has been going through some tough times. I can’t even fly.... Other disciples’ Masters have all given them magical items to help them fly, as well as life-protecting treasures. Sadly, I don’t have anything....

“But that’s fine, Master. Your apprentice doesn’t care about material things anyway. As long as I can burn some incense for you, sir, then I’m happy. Who knows, maybe your spirit in heaven will hear me and somehow manage to bequeath me with something....”

When Zheng Yuandong heard this, his eyes went wide.

“Master, it wasn’t very long ago that your apprentice gave everything to protect the sect, to ensure that its 10,000-year legacy continued on. To protect the honor of the sect, I was chased down relentlessly, and during that time, all of my magical items were lost or ruined. I came back to the sect without anything to call my own. My bags are empty. I’m more impoverished than a servant....

“I don’t want you to feel any pressure, though, Master. It’s fine. Your apprentice isn’t afraid of lacking defensive magical items. Even if I don’t have a magical flight device, I’ll still go through hell or high water for the sect. It’s my duty! However, if enough time goes by and I haven’t come to burn incense for you, Master, then that will just go to show that my lack of life-protecting magical items and magical flight devices has caused me to lose my poor little life.... At least then I will be able to personally go to reunite with you, sir.” Even as he spoke, Bai Xiaochun looked out at his dear Elder Brother Sect Leader out of the corner of his eye.

Zheng Yuandong’s face twitched. He was truly stupefied. In all the years he had practiced cultivation, this was the first time he had ever encountered a disciple as outlandish as Bai Xiaochun.

Chuckling bitterly in his heart, he looked up at the portrait of his Master, and then thought for a long moment. It was true that when he had first been apprenticed to his Master, he had been bequeathed with a protective magical device.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Zheng Yuandong looked over at Bai Xiaochun, his gaze softening.

Before long, Bai Xiaochun and Zheng Yuandong left the

immortal's cave. The entire time, Bai Xiaochun was looking at Zheng Yuandong out of the corner of his eye. Eventually, they reached the grand hall on Mount Daoseed, whereupon Zheng Yuandong stopped walking. Turning to look at Bai Xiaochun, he waved his hand, causing two streams of light to fly out, one of them gold, the other white.

The golden light contained a palm-sized flying sword. However, its mere appearance caused the air around it to distort as it radiated waves of heat. It seemed completely extraordinary, and was covered with countless complicated magical symbols which glittered radiantly, and caused fluctuations to spill out in all directions.

The white light contained a small shield, also palm-sized. It was made of white jade, and carved with extremely lifelike immortal cranes. It also radiated an intense warmth.

Bai Xiaochun could instantly tell that they were extraordinary items. Eyes shining, he began to pant as he realized that there was something even more outstanding to the two items; both of them were decorated with three unique flowing sets of lines.

Zheng Yuandong looked gently at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes gleaming with encouragement.

“Within the Golden Crow Sword is sealed a golden crow,” he said. “It contains the power of blazing fire, and can summon an illusory golden crow of the same cultivation base as the person summoning it. It can be used to fly, and can be used until the early Foundation Establishment stage. If it is destroyed, it will unleash

incredible power.

“The Divine Crane Shield is a defensive magical device created from the soul of an immortal crane. It can protect you from any deadly crisis less powerful than Foundation Establishment.

“My Master performed threefold spirit enhancements on both of these items, but didn’t dare to proceed beyond that. Back when I joined the sect, my Master gave them to me, and I hereby represent him to bequeath them to you.”

Bai Xiaochun excitedly accepted the items and began to fondle them admiringly. “Thank you, Master. Thank you, dear Elder Brother Sect Leader!”

# Chapter 71: Living Prestige Scion

---

Because of the turtle-wok, Bai Xiaochun understood quite a bit about spirit enhancement. He also was well aware that there was a Foundation Establishment elder from Violet Cauldron Peak who was a skilled spirit enhancer.

For a few merit points, that elder would help disciples perform spirit enhancements, usually no more than a one or twofold enhancement. Any higher than that, and the chances of failure mounted.

The fact that these two magical items had both received threefold enhancements meant that Bai Xiaochun wouldn't have to waste any fuel on his own three-colored flame, and would also be able to freely use them in the public eye.

After returning to Fragrant Cloud Peak, he immediately set to work familiarizing himself with the Golden Crow Sword and the Divine Crane Shield. As soon as he sent some spiritual power into them, they began to radiate intense heat.

“Now these are some treasures!” he exclaimed. Taking a deep breath, he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out. A thrumming sound filled the air as the Golden Crow Sword transformed into a golden beam of light that shot off, leaving behind a wake of burning heat that caused everything around it to ripple and distort.

With another incantation gesture, he sent more spiritual power

pouring into the sword, whereupon the bright glow surrounding it expanded until the vague shape of a golden crow became visible.

It was little more than an outline, but the instant it appeared, incredible pressure began to weigh down, and the temperature in the area increased rapidly. All of that caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to thump excitedly.

Panting, he stared at the Golden Crow Sword, eyes shining more and more brightly. Soon, he began to laugh in excitement.

"This sword is way better than my little wooden sword! Wow, my Master is awesome!" With that, he dashed into motion, leaping up into the air and landing onto the back of the illusory golden crow.

Although the golden crow was blurry and vague, its back was as flat and sturdy as a board, and when Bai Xiaochun sent some spiritual power into it, he felt almost as if he had become a part of it.

After stepping onto the golden crow, he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, which caused him to fly up into the air. Then he soared in a big circle around Fragrant Cloud Peak, whizzing through the air above the crowds. When people looked up in surprise, he would slow down, hold his head high, and puff his chest out. When cries of astonishment began to ring out, he would finally increase his speed again.

"I, Bai Xiaochun, can finally fly!" Spirits soaring, he laughed

inwardly as his tour took him over the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion. However, it was only moments later, just as he was about to head toward one of the other mountain peaks, that the golden crow suddenly faded away, and the sword fell out of the sky. Bai Xiaochun screamed as he tumbled down along with it.

Thankfully, what lay below wasn't a bottomless pit, but rather, one of the small paths that ran through the sect. He landed at a run, and only managed to gain control after several steps. Then he looked over and realized how high up this path was, and that if he had fallen off, even his Undying Skin wouldn't have saved him....

His face went pale.

"That was way too dangerous!!" he thought, shivering. With that, he picked up the Golden Crow Sword. Probing his inner spiritual power, he realized that he had been almost completely drained, which was why he had ended up falling.

For a Qi Condensation cultivator, flying on a sword took a huge amount of energy. Most who were in the seventh level of Qi Condensation would only be able to last for a few breaths of time before they had to stop. Even Bai Xiaochun, with his unusually refined spiritual power, couldn't even last a hundred breaths.

Fearful of falling to his death, he didn't dare to test the sword out anymore. Looking around furtively for a moment to see if anyone had seen what just occurred, he caught sight of a burly man off in the distance, who was staring at him, his jaw hanging open.

When Bai Xiaochun saw him, his eyes widened and he hurried over. “Whoah, aren’t you Sect Nephew Wolf?”

When the burly man heard the words ‘Sect Nephew Wolf’, he immediately shivered. Grimacing, he clasped hands and said, “I’m disciple Liu Ergou. Greetings, Sect Uncle Bai... I, um, I didn’t see anything happen just now.”

Bai Xiaochun had encountered Liu Ergou when he was selling spots in the Inner Sect. Back then, the man had called himself Lord Wolf.

Bai Xiaochun humphed a few times, then proceeded to frighten Liu Ergou a bit more to ensure that he wouldn’t spread news of what had happened. Then he patted him on the shoulder, gave some promises to help him out in the future, and finally left.

Liu Ergou wiped the sweat from his brow before hurrying off.

As he walked along, Bai Xiaochun rejoiced that it was only Liu Ergou who had seen his slight mishap. If it had happened when he was flying around by the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion, his name would have been ruined forever....

“Ai. People. You really can’t become too famous. Then things just become difficult.” Sighing to himself, he clasped his hands behind his back and strolled back to his courtyard residence.

After a bit of hesitation about what to do, his eyes flickered with



determination. “No, I have to focus on cultivation. Only being able to fly a little bit isn’t inherently bad, but what would happen if I was fleeing for my life? What if I escaped my enemies only to fall to my death? That would be really pointless.”

With that, he once again began to study the Golden Crow Sword and the Divine Crane Shield.

“Just to be safe, I should paint these two magical items as well. That way, people will think it’s just a hobby of mine. Then if I pull out other spirit enhanced magical items in the future, they won’t think too much of it.” After some more thought, he prepared some dye from brightly colored plants and proceeded to paint the Golden Crow Sword and the Divine Crane Shield.

After covering up the faint spirit designs, he tested out the two items one more time. Finally, he looked pleased.

“One of these days when my skill in the Dao of medicine is high enough, I’ll enhance some plant-based dyeing materials, and then I can be completely confident.” Bai Xiaochun was an inherently cautious person. Although he had run amuck to some extent because of becoming the Junior Brother of the sect leader, he had a bottom line that he wouldn’t cross.

“What a pity my cultivation base still isn’t high enough. The last time I was following Zhou Xinqi around, it seemed that she was already in the eighth level of Qi Condensation. The only way to be able to use a flying sword for any length of time is to have a higher cultivation base.” Determination filled his heart. After the incident with the Luo Chen Clan, he had come to fully understand how

brutal the cultivation world could be. He had also realized that the ability to flee at top speed was crucial when one's life was on the line.

If he had been able to fly on a sword back then, he would have been able to escape with Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei no matter what the Luo Chen Clan tried to do.

“I need to concoct pills!” he thought, eyes gleaming. Considering his current status, although he couldn't get free ingredients from the sect, there were certain pill formulas that he could get for only a few merit points. In the following days, Fragrant Cloud Peak became a quiet place, and Bai Xiaochun was rarely seen.

He acquired large amounts of medicine formulas, and also used the spirit stones and other items he had acquired from the Luo Chen Clan members to go to the market and purchase a variety of medicinal plants. Then he made his way to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, where he went into seclusion to concoct medicine.

Time flew by. A few months later, it had been nearly half a year since Bai Xiaochun returned to the sect. At first, the sect had been thrown into an uproar because of him, but then things had suddenly gone very quiet. Many people found it hard to adapt.

At the same time, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had become a Prestige disciple gradually spread outside of the sect. Soon, people all over the Eastwood Continent came to hear of the matter.

Of course, there were countless cultivator clans in the Eastwood Continent, many of which were connected to the Spirit Stream Sect in various ways. The Luochen Clan had been only one among many such clans.

To the disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect, although the title of Prestige disciple was to be looked up to, being the Junior Brother of the sect leader was even more impressive.

However, to the cultivator clans at large, it was exactly the opposite. They would respect a Prestige disciple far more than they would the Junior Brother of the sect leader. In fact, they almost didn't care at all about the sect leader's Junior Brother. In contrast, they would be driven to near madness by a Prestige disciple.

After hearing the news that Bai Xiaochun had become a Prestige disciple, many patriarchs of the various cultivator clans got very excited. In their eyes, he was a virtual gold mine. A living Prestige scion!

If they could bring Bai Xiaochun into their clan, then his descendants would have almost limitless possibilities for the future. As the number of such descendants grew, and considering that the clan would have the support of the Spirit Stream Sect, glory was guaranteed.

To vassal clans in the cultivation world, it would ensure a meteoric rise, like the fish who jumped the dragon gate.

After all, the Spirit Stream Sect had only ever had nine Prestige clans. Those nine clans could often influence the decision-making process of the sect as a whole. Although such influence wasn't necessarily very vast, it was still worthy of consideration.

Such a clan would form a part of an enormously powerful entity, and would be the subject of intense envy from other cultivator clans. In the past, most clans couldn't influence anything. They could only offer allegiance to the Spirit Stream Sect and then perform various services with the hope of gaining Prestige status.

But now... Bai Xiaochun had appeared.

Most wonderful of all was that he wasn't a member of any cultivator clan. He came from the mortal world, and... he had no Daoist partner. He was a free ticket to becoming the tenth Prestige clan, and as such, all of the cultivator clans in the Eastwood Continent were thrown into a frenzy.

“Find the prettiest maiden in the entire Zhou Clan. She'll be coming with me to offer greetings to Fellow Daoist Bai!”

“Fei'er, you're the pearl of the Zhao Clan. You have to get on Bai Xiaochun's good side. If he takes a liking to you, all of the problems of our clan will disappear!”

“Although the daughters of the Sun Clan aren't particularly outstanding, we still qualify to compete. Prepare an amazing gift for me to give when I go offer greetings to Fellow Daoist Bai!”

Countless cultivator clans sprang into action, using all sorts of methods, including calling upon their clan members who were already within the sect to try to get in touch with Bai Xiaochun. Even the north bank was affected. Soon, the name of Bai Xiaochun could be heard in all parts of the Eastwood Continent.

The Hou Clan was no exception.

The middle-aged patriarch of the Hou Clan summoned Hou Yunfei and Hou Xiaomei, whereupon he expressed his sincere wishes: “Yunfei, you have an unusually close relationship with Bai Xiaochun. You... have to help out the clan in this matter. I can tell that your sister has taken a liking to Bai Xiaochun. Find a good chance to act as a matchmaker between them.”

Hou Xiaomei’s face reddened. Pouting coquettishly, she hurried off.

Hou Yunfei was a bit worried, but he put on a bold face and nodded in agreement.

A few days later, people from numerous cultivator clans began to show up, gathering on Fragrant Cloud Peak around Bai Xiaochun’s residence. As news spread, some people even began to head toward the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, waiting anxiously for him to come out of seclusion.

## Chapter 72: The Sect Has Rules

---

A few days later, a boom echoed out from Bai Xiaochun's pill-concocting workstation. Moments later, he appeared, frowning and looking anxious.

“Although I'm pretty familiar with tier-1 medicinal pills now,” he lamented, “ tier-2 pills are a lot harder....” Other than cultivation, his time recently had mostly been spent on concocting medicines. In his attempt to produce some tier-2 spirit medicines, he'd already used up most of the plants and vegetation in his bag. Unfortunately, the degree of difficulty he was working with was vastly greater than before, and despite being meticulously careful, he had failed consistently.

Each time he found that he had used too many materials, he would make adjustments. And yet even then, new problems would arise.

Sighing in despair, he walked out of the Medicine Concocting Pavilion and looked up to find a large host of people sitting there cross-legged. Most of them sat in groups of three to five, with a few groups of ten in sight. The majority were pretty young women, none of whom were familiar to Bai Xiaochun.

They were all different shapes and sizes, but each one was beautiful in her own way. The lot of them were clearly vying with each other to be the most glamorous, and as soon as they saw Bai Xiaochun emerge, their eyes shone brightly.

Most had older folks sitting next to them, who also seemed delighted to see Bai Xiaochun. In fact, they all rose to their feet and rushed over in a hubbub.

Taken aback, and a bit unsure of what was going on, Bai Xiaochun subconsciously stepped back a few paces. “Hey, hold on! What... what are you people doing?”

“Fellow Daoist Bai, I’m Zhao Tianhai. Zhao Yiduo is my nephew! Hahaha! Fellow Daoist Bai, you truly are a young hero, a man of striking appearance and talent!”

“Fellow Daoist Bai! What a dragon among men, heroic and extraordinary! A single glance reveals that he’s like a roc soaring among the clouds, someone with unlimited potential. Ahem. I am Sun Yunshan, and these young women are all beauties from my clan. Fellow Daoist, if I’m not mistaken, you’re lacking in terms of maidservants, correct?”

“Fellow Daoist Bai, I am Zhou Tian. A single glance at you, Fellow Daoist Bai, and I can clearly sense your heroic spirit. You are obviously the future overlord of the eastern reaches of the cultivation world. We were destined to be friends at first sight. Look at these young women standing next to me. Every single one is a precious pearl of the Zhou Clan....”

A clamor of voices rang out, each one trying to speak first and loudest. Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide, and he retreated a few more steps. However, it only took a moment for him to realize that these people had come to offer their clan daughters to him....

He wasn't sure exactly why it was happening, but upon looking the young women over, he could see that all of them were exceptionally beautiful. In fact, many of them could be counted as being his type. The way they were being offered up seemed to indicate that if he didn't accept, he would be refusing to give them face. Instantly, Bai Xiaochun was on guard.

Of course, he was adept at dealing with people, so he didn't let any hint of that show on his face. A broad smile appeared, and after exchanging some meaningless pleasantries with the spokesmen from the various cultivator clans, he managed to extricate himself.

However, before he could reach his residence, he ran into others who had stationed themselves along the way. All of them had similar words to speak with him, and offered him their clan daughters as well as other gifts and promises.

"Something big must have happened, but what?" he thought. "Could it be that they found out one of my ancestors was an immortal? Maybe I'm not from the mortal world after all. I'm... I'm actually descended from some exalted, powerful individual? Heavens! How could I not have been aware?!" Mind spinning, he hurried along until his residence came in view. However, it was surrounded by a crowd of individuals from various cultivator clans, all of whose eyes glistened with hope. It was as if the mere nod of Bai Xiaochun's head would cause them to do anything he wished!

That was especially true of the young women. They all clustered



around Bai Xiaochun, glaring antagonistically at each other, pushing and shoving each other back and forth.

The sight of it all caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to go numb. He was completely surrounded, and no matter which way he tried to move, he ran into something soft and warm. They even began to tug at his clothing, causing his heart to pound. Finally, a cold snort rang out, and Hou Xiaomei appeared. Glaring angrily, cheeks puffed, she stormed up to him, shoving the other young women aside.

“Get out of my way! What do you people think you're doing!? This is Fragrant Cloud Peak of the Spirit Stream Sect. Don't you bunch of old coots know how to keep your cool? Get out of my way, all of you. Hey you! Look at you! You're skinnier than a greenbean! What are you shoving people around for? And you! You're fatter than a dairy cow! Get the hell out of my way!!” Hou Xiaomei sounded genuinely furious as she pushed aside all of the young women crowding around Bai Xiaochun.

She was small and delicate, but she was fuming, and seemed to be filled with boundless strength. Facing such opposition, the other young women immediately surrendered and opened a path, crying out in confusion. Hou Xiaomei stormed forward with her hands on her hips, looking like a chili pepper, the words she uttered incisive and damaging.

Bai Xiaochun took advantage of the moment to hurry into the courtyard. Once inside, he looked down to find that his garments had been tugged at so much that they were about to fall off.

“Absolutely terrifying!” he thought, gasping. Heart pounding with residual fear, he looked back out through the main gate and saw Hou Xiaomei standing there verbally sparring with the other young women, standing alone against a crowd of dozens.

Eventually, the responsible members of the cultivator clans couldn't stand idly by. They finally intervened and suggested to the young women that they leave. Clasp hands respectfully in Bai Xiaochun's direction, they promised to come back to visit at a later date.

Soon, it was evening. It was quiet outside of Bai Xiaochun's gate, but off in the distance, people from various cultivator clans were sitting cross-legged in meditation, seemingly guarding the area.

All of these people had used various means and methods to come from afar, and also had ways to keep themselves from being driven away.

Bai Xiaochun was sure that something momentous had occurred. Looking at the quiet scene outside, he eventually dragged Hou Xiaomei into the courtyard.

To outsiders, Hou Xiaomei was as fiery as a hot pepper, but as soon as Bai Xiaochun's hand made contact with her, her face turned bright red, and she felt dizzy. Her tiny frame almost went limp as Bai Xiaochun dragged her inside.

When she spoke, her voice was as soft as the drone of a mosquito. “Big... big bro Xiaochun, there are so many people around, what

are you planning to do to me...?”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, staring in shock. Seeing Hou Xiaomei’s odd countenance, he could tell that something was wrong with her, and quickly slapped her cheek. When she didn’t seem to recover, he slapped her again. Hou Xiaomei immediately regained her senses.

“What’s wrong with you!?” she snapped, stamping her foot. However, realizing she had been the one in the wrong, she tossed a jade slip to him, and then turned heel and fled.

As he watched Hou Xiaomei flee into the distance, Bai Xiaochun stood there wondering what was going on. Finally, he looked down at the jade slip and scanned it with spiritual power. As he did, his eyes went wide. After scanning it again, he stood there in the courtyard, breathing heavily.

“Prestige clan....”

The jade slip had been sent to Bai Xiaochun by Hou Yunfei, with Hou Xiaomei being the messenger. The words contained within were the type that almost couldn’t be uttered aloud. They explained why all of the cultivator clans were so interested in Bai Xiaochun’s status as a Prestige disciple, and what had occurred as a result. They also explained that the Hou Clan held an intense hope that Bai Xiaochun’s descendants... would also have the blood of the Hou Clan running in their veins.

Then Bai Xiaochun thought about how Hou Xiaomei had been

acting just now, and he rubbed his chin thoughtfully. Eyes sparkling, he thought, not about Hou Xiaomei, but about his own words from moments ago. Something momentous had occurred!

“How could I have imagined...? And here I thought the reward for my meritorious service was basically useless. I thought that being the Junior Brother of the sect leader would make me a big hero in the sect, but I never thought that being a Prestige disciple would make me so important on the outside!” He licked his lips, and soon, his heart began to beat faster.

“I could pick any Daoist partner I wanted! All of their clan resources would be at my disposal.... Finally, I have some real hope to live forever!” Chuckling mischievously, his eyes began to shine. Previously, he had been worried about how to keep up his efforts to concoct tier-2 spirit medicine. But now, people were essentially fighting over the chance to give him gifts.

“What a pity I can’t accept them all....” he murmured. But then, he was struck with inspiration.

“Wait a second! Why can’t I accept them all?!” Clearing his throat, he entered his cabin to rest for the evening, thinking the whole time about what to do next. The following morning at dawn, he leapt out of bed, trembling with excitement. After pushing open the gate of the courtyard, he found a whole host of people from various cultivator clans waiting for him.

“Fellow Daoist Bai....”

“Greetings, Fellow Daoist Bai. Your humble servant has come upon the request of our clan patriarch to offer formal greetings....”

Everyone started talking at once, filling the air with a cacophony of sound. Bai Xiaochun stuck out his chin and flicked his sleeve.

“Alright, enough is enough,” he said, smiling so widely that his eyes became slits. “Everyone come close. Whatever requests you have, we can talk them all out.” With that, he randomly nodded in the direction of one of the clans. The responsible member of the clan rushed forward in delight, dragging a few young women with him.

The women approached, looking a bit nervous. As for all of the other observing clans, they also seemed nervous, although for different reasons; they quickly began to transmit messages back home.

Things went on like that for the next clan, and then the next. One by one, all day. Bai Xiaochun met with dozens of them.

He didn’t choose any of the clan daughters, and yet, neither did he refuse anyone. He merely told them that he needed some time to think, and that the matter was too weighty to decide on a whim. As for all of the ‘introductory gifts,’ he didn’t refuse a single one.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, always handle all matters in a just and fair manner. Considering that I haven’t yet chosen which honorable clan to ally with in marriage, I truly am unable to accept your gifts.” Those were the words he would speak to each and every

clan.

Of course, the more he spoke in such a way, the more the cultivator clans insisted that he accept their gifts. In fact, they grew even more polite. Many of them went on to say that even if no marriage resulted, they still wished to be good friends. Only then did Bai Xiaochun reluctantly accept the gifts.

Although they might be fools, the people from these cultivator clans weren't stupid. They knew that when Bai Xiaochun said he needed to think about the matter, he was most likely just waiting to see which clan would make the best offer.

That, of course, was within the purvey of expectation. Furthermore, all of them feared that if they didn't offer their gifts, Bai Xiaochun wouldn't even consider their clan daughter to be his Daoist partner. The result was that the next day, the crowds hadn't thinned at all, and in fact, had grown more numerous. Furthermore, some of the cultivator clans even went so far as to say that even if their clan daughter couldn't become Bai Xiaochun's Daoist partner, they were still willing for her to be a maidservant to warm his bed at night. As long as she could pass on his bloodline, and he acknowledged them formally, that would be sufficient.

All of the visiting clans continued to offer more and more gifts. In fact, it got to the point where Bai Xiaochun was getting a bit nervous. Eventually, he truly wanted to refuse, and yet wasn't able to.

“Fine, I guess I'll accept.... Not accepting isn't really an option,

huh?” For seven or eight days in a row, he continued to receive the clans and accept their gifts. Every morning at dawn, he would walk out to find a whole host of people waiting for him.

Three more days passed. When dawn broke, Bai Xiaochun pushed open the main gate, whereupon his jaw dropped. Shockingly... not a single person could be seen. Everything was peaceful and quiet; as far as the eye could see, the area was empty.

The only things he could see were some five-colored phoenixes, flying gracefully high above. The phoenixes were the beloved pets of Elder Zhou, and often soared above Fragrant Cloud Peak around dawn. They would usually fly together in a flock, and were especially beautiful. Many disciples were jealous of them.

Bai Xiaochun rubbed his eyes and looked around. Thinking that perhaps he had opened the gate incorrectly, he went back in, closed it, and then tried again. However, the result was the same.

“What’s going on?” he thought, shocked. He quickly went off to find Hou Yunfei to ask for an explanation.

Hou Yunfei sighed and looked at Bai Xiaochun. “Last night, the sect leader issued a Dharmic decree. As your Elder Brother, he notified the cultivator clans... that according to sect rules, you can’t accept a Daoist partner within the next hundred years. Therefore... everyone had no choice but to leave.”

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped. Feeling very wronged, he said, “No more income.... No more marriage....”

Hou Yunfei wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. A moment later, though, he thought of something, and said, "Xiaochun, a friend of mine from Green Crest Peak told me that you and Shangguan Tianyou have a beef with each other. Is that right? Well, just be aware that Qian Dajin isn't important at all. However you choose to deal with him, the sect will tacitly agree. But things aren't so simple when it comes to Shangguan Tianyou!"

"What do you mean 'not so simple?'" Bai Xiaochun asked. "Is he more important than me or something?" Having been a member of the Spirit Stream Sect for so many years, Bai Xiaochun was well aware of how the sect tried to train its disciples. They pushed them toward greatness, prohibited deadly conflicts, and encouraged both cooperation and competition. Sect rules governed basic behavior. The elders of the various mountain peaks, as well as the Peak Lords themselves, provided assistance and training. And the Hall of Justice was a looming threat to deter bad behavior. The sect essentially had all aspects under control.

Of course, considering that between the north and south banks the Spirit Stream Sect had several hundred thousand disciples, it was obviously impossible to micromanage everything. Disciples would have conflicts and fights, and certain improper attitudes were impossible to control. However, the rewards and punishments in place were clear, and anyone who violated them would be strictly dealt with!

Bai Xiaochun had performed an incredible service for the sect, possessed profound skill with plants and vegetation, and could unleash extraordinary battle prowess. The sect was naturally aware of that, and valued him greatly. Of course, they didn't cater



to his every whim like a servant. If people insulted or provoked him, they wouldn't leap out to protect him.... No disciple enjoyed such treatment, neither Shangguan Tianyou nor Bai Xiaochun.

Because of that, Bai Xiaochun was of the belief that Shangguan Tianyou, an arrogant, famous Chosen who other Outer Sect disciple went so far as to call Young Lord, was still not worthy of his own attention.

After a moment of thought, Hou Yunfei responded, eyes shining as he told Bai Xiaochun everything he knew: "Shangguan Tianyou has great ambitions. He hopes that one day he will be able to enter the legendary Legacy Echelon. As such, he has continuously kept his cultivation base suppressed, keeping him between the Outer and Inner Sects. When the next trial by fire for Chosen from the north and south banks comes, he wants to take first place, and enter the Inner Sect at the top. That will earn him the chance to enter the Legacy Echelon. Were it not for that, he would have long since applied for an ordinary trial by fire to enter the Inner Sect. After all, anyone who reaches the eighth level of Qi Condensation may do so."

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun asked, "How come everyone wants to get into the Legacy Echelon? Xu Baocai told me that Zhou Xinqi, Lu Tianlei, and everyone else wants to."

"Members of the Legacy Echelon have a similar status to Prestige disciples. However, it's a different branch within the Spirit Stream Sect. You see, the Spirit Stream Sect is different from other sects. We have two branches, one of which focuses on protecting the sect, and one of which focuses on increasing its glory and power!

“Everyone from the servants to the disciples in the third level of Qi Condensation are lumped together in one lower group. Those from the fourth to the eighth level of Qi Condensation constitute the Outer Sect. At the eighth level, you can apply for a trial by fire to enter the Inner Sect.

“If you can reach Foundation Establishment... then you can become a Foundation Establishment elder, and maybe even a Peak Lord. After two sixty-year-cycles pass, if you break through to the Gold Core level, then you can become a Prime Elder, responsible for protecting and managing the sect. That is the first branch.

“The second branch is the Legacy Echelon!

“There is only one way to get in, and that is... to break through to the Gold Core level before two sixty-year-cycles pass. From then on, you will become a tool to ensure that our sect earns an even greater position in the cultivation world, that it acquires... even more powerful resources and wealth! Anyone who takes first place in the Chosen battles will be in line to enter the Legacy Echelon. I’m not really sure about the exact details, but I do know that there are rules about the whole thing!

“The only thing is, reaching the Gold Core level before two sixty-year-cycles pass is very, very difficult.... Of the members of the previous generation, the only person who has even come close is Peak Lord Li Qinghou. That’s why the sect favors him so much!”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. This was his first time hearing

an explanation of the Legacy Echelon, which also gave him a much clearer understanding of the sect itself. Soon, he left, and as he made his way off, he continued to ponder the matter.

“Legacy Echelon...?”

## Chapter 73: Who Did This!?

---

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun left Hou Yunfei's residence and returned to his own courtyard. He looked up at the sky, then around at the surrounding scenery, and thought about the cultivator clans. In his opinion, his Elder Brother Sect Leader had acted a bit domineering, and yet... even though it was now impossible to collect any more gifts, at least there was no need to return the ones he had already taken.

“Yeah! It's not my fault! It's the fault of Elder Brother Sect Leader's Dharmic decree!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun felt a bit better. After organizing all of the gifts, he went down to the market to buy a large quantity of medicinal plant ingredients for tier-2 spirit medicines. Then, he returned to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion to continue his cultivation and concocting work.

The truth was that originally, Zheng Yuandong didn't want to get involved in the matter with Bai Xiaochun and the cultivator clans. However, the events had unfolded in shocking fashion. The previous nine Prestige disciples had all been conferred their titles posthumously, after being killed in battle. Furthermore, all of them had been members of various other cultivator clans. Although none of them had ever had any direct descendants, they all had relatives among their various clans. Because of that, no problems had ever arisen, and their clans had smoothly transitioned into being Prestige clans.

Of course, the sect highly valued and also protected such clans.

But now, Bai Xiaochun was a living Prestige disciple, a terrifying status to say the least. At first, it hadn't been obvious, and time had simply passed by. Zheng Yuandong and many others never thought much about what it meant to have a living Prestige scion in their midst, and how enticing such a person would be to the cultivator clans.

But then, the cultivator clans began to show up in great numbers. At first, Zheng Yuandong had merely observed the goings-on. As far as he was concerned, it didn't really matter which clan Bai Xiaochun picked. How could he have ever imagined that with all the competition, the clans would have gone to the lengths of offering their clan daughters as handmaidens, just to acquire someone with Bai Xiaochun's bloodline?

Zhao Yuandong could only imagine what would happen if Bai Xiaochun's gave in to the temptation. If that happened... it wouldn't be long before he could sire hundreds of descendants. According to the clan rules, all first generation descendants of a Prestige disciple were automatically allowed to enter the Inner Sect, and would receive special treatment and training. Furthermore.... after those descendants began to propagate, there would be hundreds of branches of the Prestige clan. Within a few hundred years, the entire Spirit Stream Sect would be filled with the Bai Clan.... The final results would be grave indeed.

In addition to all that... as long as Bai Xiaochun remained alive, all he had to do was continue to sire offspring, and the matter would never end. He would become a living nightmare for the sect.

Because of such considerations, Zheng Yuandong held an

emergency meeting with the sect elders, including the prime elders. Their joint decision was that Bai Xiaochun could not accept a Daoist partner for a hundred years. Although it was a bit overbearing, Zheng Yuandong felt that there was no other option. He didn't want to bet everything on Bai Xiaochun's ability to resist temptation. He could only hope that after a hundred years, Bai Xiaochun would grow up and be a bit more mature.

Time passed. Soon, a year had gone by.

During that time, it was almost as if Bai Xiaochun had gone missing from the south bank. Few people ever saw him. He spent all of his time concocting medicine and practicing cultivation. He rarely left the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, where he worked hard at producing tier-2 spirit medicine.

His cultivation base had also slowly made progress. Soon, he was in the middle of the seventh level of Qi Condensation. Furthermore, he resolved one problem after another when it came to concocting tier-2 spirit medicine.

The truth was that most other journeyman apothecaries at his level would have long since concocted tier-2 medicines. But Bai Xiaochun was stubborn, and refused to start concocting another batch without first resolving each and every problem he found in the previous batch.

Eventually, after an entire year, he was finally convinced that he had resolved all of the issues regarding the concoction of tier-2 spirit medicine. With all the problems gone, he began yet another batch.

“Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills!” he exclaimed, eyes bloodshot. They were a tier-2 medicinal pill suitable for the eighth level of Qi Condensation and under. Following the recipe precisely, he selected numerous types of plants and vegetation, organized them carefully, and then began to feed them into the pill furnace.

After carefully adjusting the Earthflame, he kept a close eye on the pill furnace, occasionally adjusting the spiritual energy he fed inside. After six hours passed, the pill furnace suddenly began to shake. A strong medicinal aroma wafted out, and Bai Xiaochun’s eyes began to shine brightly. Leaning toward the pill furnace, he slapped it on the side, whereupon three red medicinal pills flew out.

“It worked!” he exclaimed excitedly. Grabbing the three pills, he looked them over. But then, his eyes went wide. “Eee? Hold on a second. Something’s not right. According to the description, Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills are supposed to be violet. How come these ones are red?”

After scratching his head for a moment, he lifted the pills up to his nose and inhaled deeply. The medicinal aroma was strong, and contained plenty of spiritual energy. However, the smell was somewhat odd, and considering that they were the incorrect color, he didn’t dare to consume them.

Sitting there thoughtfully, he thought back to all of the various steps he had taken during the concocting process. Two hours later, his eyes snapped open, and he laughed bitterly.

“I put in a bit too much Superagate Flower pollen. That tainted the rest of the medicinal plant ingredients, producing this strange side-effect.” With that, he placed the three red medicinal pills off to the side, and once again began to concoct.

This time, when the pill furnace began to shake, and the medicinal aroma spread out, a single violet medicinal pill flew out. After examining it closely, an expression of deep satisfaction appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face.

He quickly began another batch. In the following days, he continued to produce more batches, until he had a few dozen Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills. That having been accomplished, he sat down off to the side, exhausted. After some rest, he produced the red pills and looked at them with some hesitation. As far as he was concerned, each and every one of the pills he had just concocted was very valuable, and furthermore, when it came to ingredients, he was already starting to run short.

“According to the concocting instructions, as long as the pill is formed, it counts as a success. These red Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills have a bit too much Superagate Flower pollen, which caused their color to change. However, all that means is that they will have lost some effectiveness.” After a moment of hesitation, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a green bamboo needle.

It was an item he had acquired from the sect for use in medicine concocting, which could be used to make a general assessment of whether any given medicinal pill was toxic or not. After carefully inserting the needle into one of the red medicinal pills, he waited for a moment, then pulled it back out. The bamboo needle looked



exactly the same as before, as opposed to being black.

“Not toxic!” he said with a sigh of relief. However, out of caution, he still chose not to consume any of the red pills. Instead, he held them in hand as he left the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. Outside in the dawn air, he began to walk down one of the small paths that wound through the sect.

Up above, he could see a flock of five-colored phoenixes gliding elegantly through the air, occasionally making piercing cries that echoed out. Ignoring the phoenixes, he headed toward one of the local Spirit Tail Chicken farms, where he acquired a spirit tail chicken. After returning to his courtyard, he put the chicken down and then tossed one of the red medicinal pills out in front of it.

The spirit tail chicken had originally been sitting there looking a bit tired. But then it caught sight of the red medicinal pill. A tremor ran through it, and it suddenly leapt to its feet, rushed forward and pecked down toward the pill.

However, it was at this exact moment that an intensely powerful cry rang out from up above. Then, a powerful wind gusted by, and before the spirit tail chicken could reach the pill, it was blown off of its feet.

A bit frightened, Bai Xiaochun leaped backward. At the same time, the five-colored phoenixes closed in from up above, eyes wide, fighting amongst themselves the entire way. Finally, one of the strongest among the group, a male, succeeded in shoving aside his companions, whereupon he snapped up the medicinal pill and swallowed it down.

Looking with contempt at the spirit tail chicken that had been blown off to the side, the phoenix then flew up gracefully into the air. Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. Eyes wide, he could do nothing but watch as the phoenix ascended upward.

However, after flying only a short way, the elegant phoenix began to shake, and then let out a protracted wail. His eyes turned bright red as they filled with veins of blood. All of his feathers suddenly stood on end, making him look like a fireball that was about to explode.

Even more shocking was that the powerful male phoenix's muscles began to swell and ripple. Cracking sounds emanated out as the entire phoenix grew larger. Most notable of all was how the feathered area between his two legs suddenly bulged with something hard and rod-like....

A very peculiar expression could be seen on the face of the male phoenix as he looked around at the other phoenixes.

The other phoenixes trembled, and were about to scatter, when the male phoenix charged madly toward them. Next, miserable shrieks began to ring out.

Bai Xiaochun stood there in his courtyard, looking on aghast as the bulging male phoenix... violated all of the other phoenixes. Moments later, unsated, the phoenix turned in his direction, his eyes burning just as red as before, his entire body seemingly bursting with flames.

Terrified, Bai Xiaochun fled, barely able to hold back from screaming.

Thankfully, the phoenix was actually targeting, not him, but the spirit tail chicken....

Soon after, he watched as the male phoenix flew back toward the top of the mountain, clamoring loudly the entire way. Only after that did Bai Xiaochun wipe the sweat off of his brow.

“Simply terrifying....” he thought, looking down at the remaining two medicinal pills he held in hand. “Just what kind of medicinal pills are these!?!?” His heart began to pound as he realized that they must be some type of aphrodisiac. Clearly... they were also very effective.

\*\*

That day was a day that would never be forgotten by the disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak....

All birds on the mountain, regardless of what type they were, were ravaged by Elder Zhou’s maddened phoenix.... Countless disciples watched as one bird after another let out miserable shrieks. Although the birds tried as best they could to escape, none of them were a match for Elder Zhou’s phoenix. None managed to flee....

The villainous phoenix didn't even spare the spirit tail chickens, much less the other birds that Elder Zhou had raised. Anything on the mountain with wings... experienced a living nightmare that day.

All of the disciples were talking about the matter, and their hearts trembled. Soon, word spread to Violet Cauldron Peak and Green Crest Peak. Some people even came over to see the miraculous events which were unfolding for themselves.

“Did you hear that over on Fragrant Cloud Peak, one of Elder Zhou's phoenixes went mad? It started pouncing on any bird it saw....”

“I saw it with my own eyes. What a savage phoenix! It didn't even spare the passing magpies....”

“Just what was Elder Zhou doing, huh? How could he let his phoenix act like that...?”

“It was really infuriating, you know? That phoenix seemed really turned on! It pounced on some of those birds over and over again. It was brutal!”

When Bai Xiaochun heard the talk going around the sect, he began to tremble, and even felt a bit guilty.

“It isn't my fault....” he said to himself. “It's really not my fault.... I was trying to give that pill to the spirit tail chicken....”

That phoenix stole it!” Feeling wronged, he hurried back to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. After some thought, he came to the conclusion that there was no way anyone would figure out what had happened.

There he sat in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, sighing as he pulled out the remaining two red medicinal pills, which he then looked at thoughtfully.

“These medicinal pills are actually really powerful. Maybe I could use them as trump cards in a fight.... If I ever run into some wild beasts in the future, I’ll have nothing to fear.

“Well, if I want to use them as trump cards, then I better create another pill which can incite intense desire in females. The two can complement each other.” Bai Xiaochun could well imagine how two such pills could work together. If he encountered some dangerous beast in the future, he would merely throw a pill in one direction and then run off in the other.

It was an exciting prospect, but the downside was that he had no medicinal formula to work with. After pondering the matter for a while, and considering all of the various types of plants and vegetation that he knew about, he mentally prepared his own medicine formula.

About the time that Bai Xiaochun was considering how to create his own medicine formula, Elder Zhou returned to his residence at the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak. There, he stared at the ravaged and listless phoenixes, and then turned his head to see the male phoenix off in the distance, pouncing on a spirit tail chicken.

Miserable shrieks then began to ring out.

Elder Zhou's mind almost exploded. Trembling violently, he stood there feeling as if the entire world were spinning around him. Enraged, he cried out, "Who did this!?!?"

## Chapter 74: So, It Was Bai Xiaochun!

---

Elder Zhou's voice filled the entirety of Fragrant Cloud Peak, echoing out in all directions. Strange expressions could be seen on the faces of countless disciples as they heard his words. After all, the events of that day had shaken everyone....

The other elders on Fragrant Cloud Peak were also shocked by the ghastly events. The male phoenix was one of Elder Zhou's beloved pets, and therefore, no one was willing to even get near it. If the maddened beast were to accidentally be harmed, Elder Zhou would certainly be incensed.

Most importantly... Elder Zhou was the only person on Fragrant Cloud Peak who enjoyed raising fine birds, and considering it was his personal affair, no one was willing to interfere.

As for the spirit tail chickens... Li Qinghou was away, and his apprentice Zhou Xinqi had little power to do anything. Besides, the male phoenix was especially powerful, leaving Zhou Xinqi with no other option than to observe from afar, her face flushed, not daring to even step forward.

When Elder Zhou saw what was happening, he couldn't stop shaking. His heart twinged as he watched the clamoring phoenix, and when he looked around at the rest of the dispirited and listless birds, he wished to cry, and yet could find no tears.

Considering Elder Zhou's skill in the Dao of medicine, he could tell at a glance that someone had given the phoenix some sort of

medicine.

“I’ll definitely find out who was responsible for this!!”

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was in his workstation in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. Although he was mostly cut off from the sounds outside, Elder Zhou’s enraged roar reached his ears, and his heart trembled. Then an outraged expression appeared on his face as he contemplated how he was truly being unfairly accused....

He could only hope that it would be impossible to connect the matter to him, and that Elder Zhou wouldn’t come after him.... Scowling, he began to recall the exact steps he had gone through to create the aphrodisiac pill, and began to contemplate how to make it even more effective.

After several days of study and contemplation, he went out a few times to purchase medicinal plants, and even spent some merit points to acquire a few other rare ingredients. Finally, he returned to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion to attempt to concoct the pill.

Soon, explosions began to ring out. In some ways, it was true that Bai Xiaochun had already created his own medicine formula back in the trial by fire to become a journeyman apothecary. However, that was more a situation of enlightenment and adjustments to an existing formula.

It was different from the current situation, in which was truly inventing something new. The levels of difficulty couldn’t even be compared. In fact, based on Bai Xiaochun’s skill in the Dao of



medicine at the time of his promotion to journeyman apothecary, he would never have been able to do something like this. But now, after a year of experience and further research into the Dao of medicine, he was more than ready to make such an attempt.

Although he wasn't fully proficient, he had already begun to walk a path that other journeyman apothecaries couldn't even imagine. It was a path that only master apothecaries could attempt to understand.

Time passed. Half a month later, Bai Xiaochun was still in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, immersed in his attempt to create a medicine formula. After numerous attempts, he was beginning to shape his ideas into one concise concept.

Even as he excitedly began to concoct another batch, Elder Zhou stood atop Fragrant Cloud Peak, a pained expression on his face as he fed a medicinal pill to a weak, listless phoenix.

“Relax and recover,” he said. “All those things you did weren't in accord with your true desires. None of it was your fault. Just wait until you've recovered, and I'll take you to find the person who fed that pill to you. I don't care who it is, I will see to it that he pays the price!!” A brutal gleam appeared in Elder Zhou's eyes. During the past half month, he had conducted a thorough investigation of Fragrant Cloud Peak, and had even made inquiries in the other mountain peaks of the south bank.

Unfortunately, he hadn't turned up a single clue. The only option he had next was to wait until the phoenix recovered, and then take it to search for the culprit.

During the course of his investigation, he had come to find that Fragrant Cloud Peak... had become a place that winged birds avoided like the plague....

Because of the tragic events which had occurred half a month before, it was as if the air above the mountain had been filled with a shocking aroma. Any bird who smelled it wouldn't dare to draw near. Even the spirit tail chickens spent their days trembling and scared out of their minds. The disciples who cared for the chickens could only scowl miserably, not daring to give voice to their anger.

As the matter festered, a whole series of rumors began to spread....

“Do you remember what happened with the birds a few weeks ago? I heard that the bird in question ate some of Elder Zhou's medicine. That's why it changed so suddenly.... The only thing I don't understand is that Elder Zhou is still pretty young. Why would he be concocting medicine like that...?”

“Shhh... keep your voice down! Do you know why Elder Zhou likes to raise birds...? There's a very tragic secret involved. The truth is that for his entire life, Elder Zhou has never had a Daoist partner! Ahem... you know what I mean, right?”

“Heavens! How deranged! Could it be that because that bird couldn't take any more of Elder Zhou's torment, it finally went mad?!?!”

The more the rumors spread, the more exaggerated they became. Eventually, all of the disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak were spreading them. When each person passed the news along, they couldn't help but add details from their own imagination, until countless versions of the story could be heard.

When Elder Zhou caught wind of it, he got so mad he very nearly coughed up a mouthful of blood. He was of a mind to put an end to the rumors, but no matter how he tried to explain things to people, they would just look at him oddly. Although they quickly put respectful expressions on their faces, his explanations did no good, and the rumors continued to fly....

Another half month passed. One day, Elder Zhou appeared, bristling with a murderous aura, his expression unprecedentedly ferocious. The wave of his hand sent the recovered male phoenix flying out. Surprisingly, it was just as large as it had been before, and was actually a bit stronger. Clearly, it had actually profited from its previous disaster....

When Elder Zhou saw that, he felt a bit better. However, the anger in his heart still needed an outlet. He had seen the fear in the eyes of countless disciples in the sect over the last month; even members of his own generation cleared their throats in his presence, and wore odd expressions on their faces. And then there were the rumors, which left him seething in fury. At long last, he was able to bring his phoenix out into the open.

“Find me the person who gave you that medicine!!” he said through gritted teeth.

The phoenix let out a piercing cry as it flew up into the air. Elder Zhou followed along, his murderous aura growing more and more intense. Quite a few disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak were paying attention to the goings-on, and some of them even began to follow from a distance.

Soon, it was obvious that the male phoenix was flying toward Bai Xiaochun's residence. When it arrived, it began to fly in circles up above. Then it turned and glanced at Elder Zhou, looking very maligned as it let out whimpering calls. Apparently, it was telling Elder Zhou that this was the place where it had consumed the medicinal pill.

When the disciples who had followed along saw what was happening, their eyes went wide. But then they realized who the residence belonged to, and they blinked oddly.

“That looks like... Sect Uncle Bai's residence.”

“Yeah, it's definitely Sect Uncle Bai's....”

“Hmm. If the matter were blamed on anyone else, I might not believe it. But considering we're talking about Sect Uncle Bai... it actually makes sense!”

Elder Zhou hovered there in midair, trembling, eyes crimson. Gnashing his teeth, he growled, “Bai Xiaochun!!”

Now that he had found the culprit of the disaster, he scanned the

area with divine sense. Having found that the residence was empty, he waved his right hand, producing a jade slip that, based on his authority in the sect, could track Bai Xiaochun down wherever he was.

Soon, he found that Bai Xiaochun was in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion.

Normally, Elder Zhou was a calm person, but right now his face twisted with ferocious anger as he led his phoenix toward the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. The surrounding disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak were starting to get excited. They began to send messages to their friends, and soon word was spreading throughout the mountain.

“Hurry up! The culprit who drove that bird crazy has been found out!”

“Sect Uncle Bai did it!!”

Countless disciples, even some from the Inner Sect, all heard the news. Trembling with excitement, they hurried out to see what they could see.

The feelings of torment they had experienced because of Bai Xiaochun now turned into anticipation. In fact, the more torment they had experienced, the more excited they were now. Chen Zi’ang rushed out, looking thrilled. Zhao Yiduo raced out at about the same time. The two of them exchanged pleased glances, and then raced in Bai Xiaochun’s direction as quickly as possible.

Among the crowd was one particularly burly man, whose cheeks were wet with tears. It was none other than the self-proclaimed Lord Wolf, Liu Ergou. Throwing his head back, he roared, "Judgement comes!"

Even as all of Fragrant Cloud Peak was thrown into a commotion, Bai Xiaochun was there in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, looking excitedly at the pill furnace in front of him. It was trembling, and a strong medicinal aroma wafted out from it as several white medicinal pills appeared.

These pills currently had no names, and were not meant to be consumed by humans. In fact, if you pushed down on them too hard, they would collapse into dust. They had only one use... to make male animals incredibly attractive to whoever consumed the pill.

Bai Xiaochun had filled them with several powerful stimulants, and had even gone to the trouble of procuring some spirit creature ingredients from the north bank. The cost was high, but he had succeeded.

The pills were not weak by any means. Although Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure exactly how powerful they were, he could well guess, and was sure that they weren't inferior at all. Actually, to ensure that they were as powerful as possible, he had even performed spirit enhancements on all of the ingredients before using them.

Face bright with anticipation, he looked down at the white

medicinal pills, trying to imagine the results of using the pills in concert with the aphrodisiac pills. He couldn't hold back from laughing.

“This will be the Pheromone Pill. That sounds good. And the red one from before will be the Aphrodisiac Pill!” After a bit more thought, he performed threefold spirit enhancements on all of them.

In the briefest of moments, the medicinal pills completely changed. No longer were they low-grade, but instead, superior-grade!!

As for their medicinal efficacy... Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone at the mere thought of it.

“Hmph! Now it doesn't matter what kind of beast I face, from now on, when I say jump, they'll jump!” Coughing dryly, he put the medicinal pills away. Feeling very proud of himself, he was just about to go outside and take a walk when...

He heard an enraged roar echoing down from the sky.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

## Chapter 75: I've Been Wrongly Accused!!

---

The shocking roar of fury caused even the trees in the area to tremble. Leaves fell, to be picked up by the raging wind, which swept them to and fro.

When Bai Xiaochun heard the enraged cry, he was so scared he almost jumped straight up into the air. He looked up, and saw the white-haired Elder Zhou hovering up above, veins bulging out all over his neck and face.

Elder Zhou seemed like a wild beast, and in fact, actually looked quite similar to the way the phoenix had a month ago....

“Bai Xiaochun, it was you that harmed my phoenix. On this day, even if Li Qinghou tries to interfere, I will teach you a harsh and bitter lesson!” With another thunderous roar, he extended his right hand and made a vicious grasping gesture in Bai Xiaochun’s direction.

That gesture caused the air around Bai Xiaochun to begin to solidify. Bai Xiaochun trembled inwardly and let out a miserable shriek. A silver glow sprang out from his skin, and at the same time, a white light appeared further out as he activated the Divine Crane Shield. From a distance, it almost looked like an eggshell.

“He’s trying to kill me! He’s trying to kill me!!” As soon as the light enveloped him, he ignored the pressure crushing down from Elder Zhou and unhesitatingly shot off at the highest speed possible.



“Eee?” murmured Elder Zhou. Although he hadn’t used his full strength, considering he was in the early Foundation Establishment stage, even a fraction of his power should have been enough to prevent any Qi Condensation cultivator from breaking free.

Looking at the light-wreathed Bai Xiaochun fleeing off into the distance, he roared, “Bai Xiaochun, do you really think I don’t know that you were out to harm me even when you were back in the Ovens? I know that the ginseng root that was meant for my soup was eaten by you, all the way down to the spirit rootlets! I also know that it was your idea to make the bowls shallower. And now you went and fed some medicine to my phoenix! On this very day, I will ensure that you come to understand the severe consequences of stirring up trouble in our sect!”

With that he gave chase.

The truth was that all of the elders in the sect knew about the things that went on in the Ovens.

“You can’t blame me!” Bai Xiaochun shrieked miserably. “That bird of yours stole my medicinal pill! I really had nothing to do with it!” Looking back over his shoulder, he saw the overly aggressive Elder Zhou, his cultivation base unfathomable. Bai Xiaochun immediately pushed forward with as much speed as possible, as if his life depended on it, rapidly transforming into nothing more than a set of afterimages.

Up in midair, the male phoenix heard Bai Xiaochun's words, and his feathers immediately stood on end. Letting out a miserable squawk, he pointed his wings at Bai Xiaochun, and if he could talk, he would obviously be crying hysterically to everyone present that it was Bai Xiaochun who had given him the medicine. He most certainly hadn't stolen it!!

"Y-you...!" Seeing the phoenix falsely accuse him made Bai Xiaochun feel worse than before. How could he ever have imagined that, given how smart he was, he would one day be framed by a bird?

Hatred filled his heart. Looking at the bird, he decided firmly in his heart that once this matter was resolved, he would ensure that bird felt what it was like to be humiliated. The bird might be a male, but Bai Xiaochun would find an even manlier bird to teach it a lesson.

"How dare you quibble over meaningless details!" Elder Zhou said, picking up speed. As he shot toward Bai Xiaochun, he waved his sleeve, causing a massive power to shoot through the air. When it landed on Bai Xiaochun, however, he merely staggered a bit, and then picked up speed as if nothing had happened.

The scene caused Elder Zhou's eyes to widen. He had used enough power to send any other Outer Sect disciple tumbling to the ground, and yet Bai Xiaochun treated it as if it were nothing.

Bai Xiaochun was also shocked. The blow just now had shaken him down to his teeth, and left him trembling. Looking back at Elder Zhou, he quickly produced the Golden Crow Sword and

poured some spiritual power into it. The golden crow materialized, and Bai Xiaochun transformed into a golden beam of light that shot up into the air.

Elder Zhou snorted coldly, and also flew up, joined by his phoenix.

All of the observing disciples in the area felt quite pleased at the ability to revel in Bai Xiaochun's misfortune. Seeing him flee madly for his life enabled them all to release a bit of the anger which had been festering inside of them.

Wide smiles blossomed on the faces of Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo, and Liu Ergou, the so-called Lord Wolf, was so happy that tears streamed down his face.

"The heavens do have eyes!!" he murmured.

Flying through the air over Fragrant Cloud Peak, Bai Xiaochun let out a miserable cry. Anyone who wasn't watching what was happening but heard that scream would be completely shocked.

"Elder Zhou, your bird's lying! I'm telling the truth, and he's making stuff up!" Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, but no tears would come. He stood atop the golden crow, pushing forward with everything he could muster.

"Shut up!" Elder Zhou roared. It was bad enough that Bai Xiaochun was constantly saying all kinds of things about his bird,

but even worse, there were plenty of people who could hear it, and all of them had odd expressions on their faces. Elder Zhou's right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, causing a blast of air to shoot toward Bai Xiaochun.

“But it's true! Your bird is falsely accusing me!” Bai Xiaochun just wanted to resolve the situation, and yet, the blast of air continued to close in, leaving him trembling in fear. Somehow pushing forward with even more speed, he managed to avoid the blast, and it smashed a sizeable hole into a nearby boulder.

Bai Xiaochun looked over his shoulder at the hole, and his scalp went numb. Finally, he decided to call upon his most powerful backer, “I'm the Junior Brother of the Sect Leader! I'm the apprentice of Daoist Master Spiritsieve!”

“Nobody can help you now!” Elder Zhou said, glaring. The truth was that he was actually losing a bit of face by personally chasing after Bai Xiaochun. What was even worse was that he hadn't even touched Bai Xiaochun, who was fleeing like a rabbit whose tail had been stepped on. It was truly a miserable sight.

Somewhere on Fragrant Cloud Peak, Xu Baocai looked up at what was happening, mixed emotions on his face. Of course, he wasn't worried about Bai Xiaochun. Rather, he felt bad for Elder Zhou, and couldn't help but think back to his own past.

“Stop running, Bai Xiaochun!!” Elder Zhou cried, closing in like a powerful roc. Next to him, his phoenix continued to let out piercing cries, and occasionally pointed at Bai Xiaochun with his wings.

“I’m a Prestige disciple!” Bai Xiaochun screamed. “I’ve shed blood for the sect! I’ve performed incredible service!!” As he fled for his life, his words echoed out even to Violet Cauldron Peak. Many people there looked up and saw Bai Xiaochun in full flight, and strange expressions quickly filled their faces. When they realized what was happening, they couldn’t hold back from laughing.

“That title is given to the dead,” Elder Zhou growled. “I’m going to make you into a true Prestige disciple!” The truth was that he didn’t really plan to kill Bai Xiaochun. He just wanted to teach him a very hard lesson. Hoping to scare him, he waved his hand again, sending out another blast of wind, which caused a vortex to spring up around Bai Xiaochun.

When Bai Xiaochun heard Elder Zhou’s words, and then saw the wind vortex appear, he screamed even harder than before. He poured all of the spiritual power he could muster into the Golden Crow Sword. Bai Xiaochun burst out from within the vortex, surrounded by golden light, shooting all the way to the midway point between Fragrant Cloud Peak and Mount Daoseed. It was only then that the light began to fade.

Silver light glittered around him as he charged onward, screaming. He was well aware that Li Qinghou wasn’t in the sect at the moment, and that the only person who could save him was his Elder Brother Sect Leader, which was why he was now heading toward Mount Daoseed.

Elder Zhou was inwardly shocked that Bai Xiaochun had been

able to dodge his attacks so many times, and was now sure that this was one of the reasons he'd been able to make it out alive when being pursued by the Luo Chen Clan.

However, considering that there were so many people watching, it left Elder Zhou with little face, and only served to fuel his anger. Unleashing all of his cultivation base, he shot after Bai Xiaochun once again.

“Elder Brother Sect Leader, save me!” Bai Xiaochun wailed at the top of his lungs. Whistling through the air at top speed, he continued to evade Elder Zhou as he headed toward Mount Dao Seed. His incredible agility made him very slippery.

Of course, if Elder Zhou truly unleashed all of his Foundation Establishment divine abilities and techniques, he would probably have been able to pin Bai Xiaochun down. However, all he wanted to do was teach him a lesson. If he started using magical techniques, and didn't reign in their power perfectly, he could very well deliver a fatal blow.

However, at the moment, he couldn't even hit Bai Xiaochun at all, and yet, Bai Xiaochun was screaming miserably, which caused Elder Zhou to get even more angry. He quickly performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing dark clouds to form in the sky above. Thunder crashed as lightning suddenly shot down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were as round as saucers. The terrifying power he sensed within the lightning left his mind somewhat blank. Eyes bloodshot, he performed a double-handed incantation

gesture and then pointed out. Instantly, violet qi appeared above his head, which shot toward the lightning.

Elder Zhou was astonished. He'd set out to simply scare Bai Xiaochun, and although the lightning seemed like an attack, he'd aimed it to land next to Bai Xiaochun, not on him. But now, Bai Xiaochun was actually fighting back against it, causing Elder Zhou to suddenly try to reign the lightning in. Unfortunately, he couldn't stop all of it.

Violet qi swirled up from Bai Xiaochun to meet the lightning, and as it did, the image of a cauldron appeared. When it slammed into the lightning, massive rumbling sounds echoed out, shaking everything in the area. The violet qi scattered, and as for the lightning, it dimmed by about half before slamming into the ground.

Bai Xiaochun's face went pale, and he let out another plaintive scream.

“Save me, Elder Brother! Save me, Master! Oh that the spirit of my Master in the heavens would save me!!”

Elder Zhou stopped in place in midair, looking at Bai Xiaochun in surprise. Just now, he had managed to reduce the power of the lightning by about half, but even the remaining bit should have been enough to seriously injure any Qi Condensation cultivator. And yet, other than causing Bai Xiaochun's face to go pale, and sending his qi and blood into chaos, it had done little else.

“That was... Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning,” Elder Zhou murmured to himself. “Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei both said that Bai Xiaochun had gained enlightenment of Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning, but that level of power exceeds the seventh level of Qi Condensation. The battle prowess this kid can unleash with that technique is incredible!”

A strange light gleamed in Elder Zhou’s eyes. Now that he realized Bai Xiaochun was a Chosen of this caliber, some of his anger was mitigated. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun’s ear-splitting screaming left him unsure of whether to laugh or cry. With a cold snort, he once again gave chase.

“I don’t care if the phoenix was at fault, Bai Xiaochun was the main cause. This kid is stubborn and mischievous; I need to take the chance to scare him into restraint.”



# Chapter 76: Eighth Level Of Qi Condensation!

---

Moments ago, the Foundation Establishment cultivators of the three mountain peaks had been looking on, smiling with the realization that Elder Zhou was simply trying to frighten Bai Xiaochun. But then Bai Xiaochun suddenly fought back against the lightning, and their expressions flickered. Many were about to intervene, but then they realized that the lightning didn't harm him at all.

Strange gleams appeared in their eyes.

“This kid is extraordinary!”

“No wonder the Luochen Clan couldn't chase him down and kill him! He has some very unique abilities!”

“This young scion of ours might just be on the same level as Shanguan Tianyou. He's clearly surpassed Lu Tianlei and Zhou Xinqi already!”

As they looked on, nodding inwardly, Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong stood atop Mount Daoseed, watching the situation unfold with a strange look in his eyes. Even as Bai Xiaochun cried out at the top of his lungs, Zheng Yuandong was using divine sense to watch everything.

He was shocked by what he saw Bai Xiaochun doing. Instead of

immediately interfering, he waited, hoping to see Bai Xiaochun show off his full potential. Eventually, he began to nod with admiration. Finally, he flickered into motion, appearing directly in front of the madly-fleeing Bai Xiaochun.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw Zheng Yuandong, he cried out, “Dear Elder Brother Sect Leader, Elder Zhou is trying to kill me! My poor little life is on the line!!” Even as the words left his mouth, he dove behind Zheng Yuandong to hide.

Zheng Yuandong coughed dryly at Bai Xiaochun’s woeful appearance. Smiling wryly, he looked up at the incoming Elder Zhou, who was glaring fiercely at Bai Xiaochun. A moment later, Elder Zhou came to a stop in front of him, where he clasped hands in greeting.

These two men were wily old foxes, and as soon as their eyes met, they both knew what the other was thinking. Both of them were well aware that Bai Xiaochun’s presence meant that the sect had another fearfully talented person in its ranks. That was something far more important than the trifling incident with the phoenix.

If Li Qinghou were in the sect, things would have been easier to keep under control. But with him gone, no one in the sect could really control Bai Xiaochun. That was especially true considering his recent achievements, coupled with the fact that he was a Prestige disciple and the Junior Brother of the sect leader.

Zheng Yuandong was fairly certain that if he tried to punish Bai Xiaochun, Bai Xiaochun would simply go to the portrait of his Master to weep and complain.

“Sect Leader,” said Elder Zhou, “please pay no heed to this affair and hand Bai Xiaochun over to me immediately!” With that, Elder Zhou glared at Bai Xiaochun, chuckling cruelly.

Bai Xiaochun’s scalp immediately went numb, and he began to explain, “Your bird–”

As soon as Elder Zhou heard the word ‘bird’, his face began to turn green. Bai Xiaochun immediately bit his tongue and turned his pleading gaze to Zheng Yuandong.

“Elder Brother,” he said, “I’ve shed my own blood for the sect, I’ve performed great services....”

Zheng Yuandong’s face twitched, and he coughed dryly.

“Elder Zhou,” he said, “let’s drop this matter. Xiaochun might be a bit naughty and mischievous, but he’s a good person. How about this. If anything like this happens again in the future, I won’t intervene at all, and you can handle the matter any way you see fit.”

Elder Zhou looked very torn, but eventually he nodded begrudgingly. Then he took his leave, casting one more glare at Bai Xiaochun as he did.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and slowly rose to his feet. He looked a bit suspicious; he was an intelligent person, and the way

things had turned out seemed very sudden. Something seemed off.... However, he wasn't completely sure of what it all meant, so he looked over at the sect leader.

Zheng Yuandong looked back at him. "Those phoenixes were raised by Elder Zhou's former Daoist partner," he said coolly. "There was a battle once outside the sect in which that Daoist partner died in the process of saving Elder Zhou's life. Elder Zhou himself barely survived. The pain of losing his Daoist partner harmed his mind, and he nearly went insane.

"Most people think he's merely obsessed with plants and vegetation. What they don't know is that without that obsession, he wouldn't be able to suppress the insanity within. He uses that obsession to stave off the madness.

"In the future, don't provoke him. If he really goes mad, I might not be able to save you in time."

Hearing this, Bai Xiaochun's spine tingled in fear, and yet, he couldn't help but feel a bit sorry for Elder Zhou. Nodding vigorously, he said, "I really didn't give it the medicine. His thing... er, his bird really did steal it from me."

Zheng Yuandong patted Bai Xiaochun's shoulder. "Karma exists everywhere. In this case, the Karma was sown by you, so there's no need to think too much about the details." With that, Zheng Yuandong turned and left.

Bai Xiaochun sighed at how unlucky he was, and began to

contemplate ways to avoid Elder Zhou in the future. Then he cautiously returned to Fragrant Cloud Peak, where he went into seclusion in his residence.

As for the thieving bird, Bai Xiaochun decided that considering how he needed to avoid provoking Elder Zhou, it would be best to cast aside any thoughts of revenge.

“True men don’t fight with birds!” he told himself to make the decision easier to stomach. Sitting there in his log cabin, he produced several of the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills he had concocted. Thinking back to how Elder Zhou had attacked him during the chase, his eyes gleamed with envy.

“Foundation Establishment cultivators are pretty incredible,” he thought, sighing. “He almost made me cough up some blood. Thankfully I have my Undying Skin.” With another glance at the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills, he looked around furtively to make sure he was alone, and then produced the turtle-wok to perform some spirit enhancements.

Soon, all of the pills had received threefold enhancements, and contained faint silver designs on their surfaces. Bai Xiaochun sighed again.

“If only I had some fuel to make four-colored flame.” Based on some discreet inquiries he’d made earlier, he knew that the sect did have fuel to make four-colored flame. However, it wasn’t very plentiful, and required an incredible amount of merit points to acquire. With the exception of certain unique medicines, or certain cultivation practices related to fire, it was rare to ever need four-

colored flame.

It was generally impossible to procure such fuel from the market at the bottom of the mountain; the only place it usually appeared was at auction, and even then, it wasn't commonly seen.

"I'm running low on spirit tails too," he thought. After some more thought, he finally popped one of the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills into his mouth and began to cultivate.

Days passed. Bai Xiaochun practiced cultivation the entire time, occasionally consuming Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills as he did. His cultivation rapidly progressed until eventually, he ran out of pills.

It happened late at night, when the clouds filled the sky obscuring the moon. Inside, rumbling could be heard, not within the cabin itself, but inside Bai Xiaochun's body.

He began to shake as spiritual power built up inside of him, becoming a vast, dragon-like river that raged through all of his qi vessels.

After completing a full cycle within him, his overall spiritual power expanded, surpassing his previous limit significantly. Filth oozed out from the pores all over his body, and an invigorating sense of buoyancy filled him. Enlivened, his eyes snapped open, and they shone like beacons in the dark of night.

“The eighth level of Qi Condensation!” Laughing heartily, he rushed out of his courtyard to wash off.

He had been in the Spirit Stream Sect for years now, and although he was a lot tougher, he hadn't grown much physically, which left him feeling a bit depressed. In terms of his overall appearance, he was still just as pure and fair, and just as skinny.

“Now that I'm in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, my controlling arts should be much more powerful.” He waved his finger at a nearby boulder, which subsequently flew up into the air. In accord with Bai Xiaochun's will, it sped up, then slowed down as he experimented with both Lightness-in-Heaviness and Heaviness-in-Lightness.

“What I'm most interested in, however, is what I accidentally unleashed when fighting Chen Heng... the Human Controlling Grand Magic!” Eyes shining with a bright light, Bai Xiaochun experimented a bit more, but made little progress. After all, controlling inanimate objects and controlling people were two different things. Finally, he decided to abandon the idea for the time being.

Later, back in his courtyard, he stood there contemplating the matter.

“In the description of the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning art, it says that once you cultivate all the way to the eighth level, you can utilize a mid-grade version of Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning.”

With that, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and waved his finger. Violet qi swirled about, and after two breaths of time passed, a large violet cauldron appeared in front of him.

This time, it went much faster than before, at least twice as fast!

Furthermore, it was larger than before, and it was much more corporeal. It was so clear that various magical symbols could be seen engraved on the surface of the cauldron.

From the terrifying pressure that radiated from the large cauldron, Bai Xiaochun could tell that it was anything but ordinary.

“That pressure is far more powerful than before!”

He quickly probed his cultivation base; when he used Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning in the past, it drew significantly on his spiritual power, and would require a lot of cultivation to recover from afterward.

But now, he still retained about seventy percent of his internal spiritual energy.

“I can use it three times in a row!” Elated, he dispersed the violet cauldron and pulled out the Golden Crow Sword. As the golden light spread, he stepped onto the golden crow, and then flew out of the sect.



Soon he was in the jungle outside of the sect. Up above, the sky rumbled with thunder, as though a storm were brewing. Sensing the impending danger of the storm, Bai Xiaochun quickly stopped in place and performed an incantation gesture, once again summoning the violet cauldron. Waving his finger, he sent it smashing into a nearby boulder.

A boom echoed out, and the ground trembled, startling countless birds and animals. A crater appeared, with crevices snaking out from it for thirty meters in all directions.

“So powerful!!” he said with a gasp. After measuring himself up, he was sure that with his Undying Silver Skin and Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning, if he had to fight Chen Heng again, it wouldn’t take much effort on his part to wipe him out.

“Or maybe not....” he thought after a bit of hesitation. After all, fighting Chen Heng would still be quite dangerous, and would be best avoided. He could still lose his poor little life. The best thing would be to fight only enemies in the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

“With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun, could easily turn anyone from the first to the seventh level of Qi Condensation into ash!” He flicked his sleeve proudly, but unfortunately, there was no nearby fence to stand on. He was forced to remain on the Golden Crow Sword, sticking his chin out, looking up at the clouds like a lonely hero. Finally, he turned the Golden Crow Sword around and headed back toward the sect.

However, it was at this point that... countless lightning bolts

formed overhead. Attracted by the Golden Crow Sword, they began to descend toward Bai Xiaochun like silver snakes....

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and moments later, agonized screams could be heard amidst the crash of thunder.

# Chapter 77: Auction

---

Soon after, Bai Xiaochun hobbled back to Fragrant Cloud Peak, hair standing on end, face smudged with ash. Heart pounding with residual fear, he crawled back into his courtyard and thought back to the rain of lightning he had just passed through, and shivered. Then he swore an oath to never again fly on a sword through a thunderstorm.

That wasn't flying, that was risking one's life!

Back in his log cabin, he grimaced in pain for quite some time before composing himself. Sitting down cross-legged on his bed, he looked at the rain falling outside, and then slowly rotated his cultivation base.

“Tier-2 spirit medicines are appropriate for the eighth level of Qi Condensation and lower. If I want to raise my cultivation base any further, I really need to concoct some tier-3 spirit medicine.” Resting his chin on his hand, he pondered the matter.

“Tier-3 spirit medicines are even harder to concoct. The only way to do it with confidence is to first be very familiar with numerous tier-2 spirit medicines. Without a stable foundation, the chances of success are small.” With that, he opened his bag of holding and examined his current accumulation of resources. The result was a long sigh. Although he had collected quite a few gifts due to his status as a Prestige disciple, he had consumed a terrifying amount of ingredients in his pill-concocting efforts recently. The result was that his stores were running low.

“I can’t keep going on this way,” he said, bowing his head thoughtfully. “I’ll definitely run out! I’m already a pretty incredible journeyman apothecary. Maybe I should try to sell some medicine.”

That thought started to get him excited. By the next morning, the rain had stopped, and he left his residence to go to the market and ask some questions. After getting a clearer idea of the prices of various medicinal pills, he bought a huge batch of medicinal plants, and then went to the sect to buy more with merit points.

Finally, he took another trip to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion to begin working.

Although tier-2 medicinal pills would fetch a high price, they consumed a lot of ingredients. Furthermore, considering the way he concocted, they wouldn’t be the best use of his time.

Therefore, he chose to concoct some tier-1 medicines that he was more familiar with. Over the course of the following days, he produced three different types of spirit medicines, each batch of which produced eight or nine pills. He also made two sticks of spirit incense. With that accomplished, he headed back to the market.

The south bank market wasn’t very large. Other than a few shops set up by Inner Sect disciples and other senior members of the sect, most of the establishments were run by various cultivator clans from other parts of the Eastwood Continent.

It was like a little town, bustling mostly with Outer Sect disciples from the three mountain peaks. Having been there on numerous occasions, Bai Xiaochun was quite familiar with the place. After finding the shop he was looking for, he entered and cleared his throat, whereupon a salesperson approached.

“Call the shop owner out,” Bai Xiaochun said. “In addition to buying some ingredients, this time I want to sell some medicinal pills!” With that, he sat down in a chair, smiling so broadly that his eyes turned into slits.

A short time later, a middle-aged man wearing a long violet robe walked up. When he saw that it was Bai Xiaochun, he smiled.

“Fellow Daoist Bai, I am your humble servant Sun Chen,” he said, clasping hands. “I’ve heard many stories about you, Fellow Daoist Bai, but was always worried about disturbing your peace, so I never went to offer formal greetings. I truly regret that now.” Beaming, Sun Chen sat down across from Bai Xiaochun. Well aware of Bai Xiaochun’s high position in the sect, he had no desire to offend him. Furthermore, the fact that he was a Prestige disciple meant that the Sun Clan still wanted to get on Bai Xiaochun’s good side, despite the hundred-year-prohibition set in place by the sect leader.

Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily and then exchanged some pleasantries. Next, he pulled out three bottles of medicinal pills and two sticks of incense, which he placed on the table between them.

Sticking his chin out, he asked, “Fellow Daoist Sun, how much do

you think these are worth?”

Sun Chen picked up the medicinal pills, and after examining them, seemed pleasantly surprised. Although they were low-grade tier-1 medicinal pills, they had an impurity level of only about eighty-one or eighty-two percent, placing them very close to the mid-grade level. The pills usually acquired by the shop tended to be low-grade pills with impurity levels of eighty-four or eighty-five percent.

Looking up at Bai Xiaochun with shining eyes, he said, “Brother Bai, your Dao of medicine is quite refined. We would love to purchase all of your spirit medicines. How about we offer you 120 spirit stones? What do you say?”

Bai Xiaochun was instantly delighted. That price was almost four spirit stones per medicinal pill, which was just about the highest price possible for low-grade tier-1 medicinal pills.

Actually, the production cost for such a pill was, on average, only about half a spirit stone.

Thrilled, the two of them completed the transaction and then continued to chat a bit. Eventually they came to an agreement; as long as Bai Xiaochun continued to supply the shop with medicinal pills, he could acquire ingredients without handing over any spirit stones. In the end, Bai Xiaochun left feeling very pleased.

More time passed. Months went by in a flash, during which time Bai Xiaochun continuously concocted tier-1 spirit medicines to sell

in exchange for ingredients. He also spent time familiarizing himself with tier-2 spirit medicines.

Gradually, he grew more and more adept.

At the same time, his relationship with the Sun Clan's medicine shop grew more stable. The Sun Clan bought virtually all of his medicinal pills. One day during the course of doing business, Sun Chen took a few bottles of medicinal pills and handed some plant ingredients over to Bai Xiaochun. As they chatted, Sun Chen sighed and said, "Brother Bai, considering your skill in medicine concocting, why don't you concoct some tier-2 spirit medicine? Every few years a hundred clans auction is held, and as of today, it's only about three months away. If you concocted some tier-2 spirit medicine, I could help you put some of it up for auction. I'm sure you'd get a great price."

After their months of doing business together, Sun Chen had come to find that Bai Xiaochun was cheerful and charismatic, and quite the joy to interact with, which was why he was being so helpful.

Bai Xiaochun had also heard of the hundred clans auction, which was arranged by roughly a hundred of the cultivator clans from the Eastwood Continent. There were three locations where the auctions would be held. One was in the north bank market, the second was the south bank market, and the third was in the largest city of cultivators on the continent, Eastwood City.

Bai Xiaochun had been in the Spirit Stream Sect for several years already, and the last auction had been held around the time he had

first joined the Outer Sect. Back then, he had been mostly focused on stealing spirit tail chickens, and hadn't been interested in auctions.

His interest having been piqued, he asked a few questions about when exactly the south bank auction would be held, and then finally took his leave. After returning to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, he sat down cross-legged to think for a while before finally making a decision.

“What Sun Chen said makes sense. Instead of selling a little bit here and there, I might as well take advantage of the situation to sell something really expensive. Afterward, I can purchase a whole bunch of ingredients.” After considering things, he thought of some various tier-2 spirit medicines, and finally decided... to concoct the one he was most familiar with, the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pill.

Having made his decision, he went into seclusion at the Medicine Concocting Pavilion and began to work on concocting Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills. Two months went by. After exchanging all of the medicinal pills he could for ingredients, he was able to concoct three bottles of Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills, each one containing ten pills.

He also ended up with one pill whose color was different from the other light violet pills. This pill was dark violet, and didn't have a very strong medicinal aroma, as if it refused to let such an aroma waft out from within it.

When that particular medicinal pill had emerged, the pill furnace



had shaken in a way that was clearly different than the previous times. It was even been accompanied by a burst of Earthflame.

Upon closer examination of the pill, Bai Xiaochun's eyes gleamed with excitement.

“Mid-grade! I, Bai Xiaochun, have finally concocted a mid-grade spirit medicine!

“There probably won't be very many mid-grade spirit medicines at the auction. However, if I really want to cause a stir, I'll have to do better than this. After all... this auction only happens once every few years. There will surely be plenty of rare items up for sale.” After some thought, he gritted his teeth and then took out the turtle-wok to perform a spirit enhancement.

After the threefold enhancement was completed, silver light glittered, and the spirit medicine was no longer mid-grade. It had broken all the way past superior-grade to be... premium-grade!

This type of premium-grade pill was quite shocking, with an impurity level of only ten percent or so.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased. The Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pill resting in his hand was now so dark it was almost black. It had three spirit designs on its surface, which were faint but clearly visible; anyone who laid eyes on the pill would be able to tell that it was something extraordinary.

Bai Xiaochun suddenly had the feeling that this pill was another tool he could use to become famous. Laughing proudly, he pulled out a little knife and carved a picture onto it... a lovely little turtle.

“Lord Turtle will once again make an appearance!” Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet in excitement and anticipation.

He took his medicinal pills out of the sect, and returned two hours later in high spirits, looking very pleased with himself. He could still picture the shock on Sun Chen’s face the moment he saw the three bottles of Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills. The moment he noticed that there was also a premium-grade spirit medicine which had received a threefold spirit enhancement, his jaw had nearly dropped to the floor in astonishment.

“Only one more month to go until the auction,” Bai Xiaochun thought, looking at the jade slip he held, which was his ticket to the auction itself.

Throughout the following days, everyone was talking about the auction. Soon, the disciples of the three mountain peaks on the southern bank began to make various preparations, hoping to strike it lucky at the auction. The market also thrummed with activity.

“One of my clanmates from the north bank said that in the last auction, a Yellow Springs Flame went up for sale, a legendary item! It was only a spark, but could still be considered a unique treasure. One of the disciples from the north bank bought it at an exorbitant price.”

“There should be tons of unique treasures up for sale at this hundred clans auction, including a lot of shocking medicinal pills. That’s because the Outer Sect Chosen battles will be coming up. They only happen once every thirty years!”

“You’re probably right. The joint north and south bank Outer Sect Chosen battles are a grand occasion for the entire Spirit Stream Sect. It’s too bad that the top ten from the south bank haven’t been able to match up to the north bank for years now! I wonder if one of the south bank’s top ten will be able to get revenge this year!?”

Over the following month, talk of the auction grew more and more common throughout the sect. Bai Xiaochun heard much of the talk, and noticed a lot of people discussing the joint north and south bank Outer Sect Chosen battles. However, he didn’t pay much attention to such talk.

Soon, the month had passed. One morning at dawn when Bai Xiaochun was meditating, his eyes suddenly opened, and he pulled a glowing jade slip out of his bag of holding.

“The auction is going to start,” he thought, eyes shining with anticipation. He quickly hurried out of his courtyard and raced down the mountain. Along the way, he passed quite a few Outer Sect disciples, until he noticed a few beams of light speeding by over head.

He smacked his own forehead at the realization that he’d

forgotten about being able to fly. Quickly performing an incantation gesture, he summoned the Golden Crow Sword. Stepping onto the golden crow, he transformed into a beam of golden light that shot off into the distance.

He soon reached the market. Head high and chest out, he entered the auction pavilion.

It was a huge structure, with several thousand seats set up on the auction floor, as well as an open area behind the seats where a crowd of people stood, packed together tightly. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was whisked away by Sun Chen, who took him to a private room on the second floor, and then left.

The room was relatively small, with a narrow balcony, beneath which was the main auction floor. The auction stage was also clearly visible.

This was not Bai Xiaochun's first time being present for such a lively affair. Instead of behaving like the Foundation Establishment cultivators in the other private rooms, who stayed out of sight, Bai Xiaochun made sure to lean out of the balcony. Worried that people might not notice him, he began to clear his throat as loudly as possible.

Soon, some people down below saw him, casting odd glances at him before turning away.

Unfortunately, there were simply too many people present, so no matter how loudly he cleared his throat, the sound would only go

so far. Off in the distance, he caught sight of Hou Xiaomei, as well as Zhou Xinqi and some of the other people he knew. However, they were too far away to notice him.

Even after yelling at the top of his lungs, they didn't turn his way, and he started to get a bit depressed. Finally, he lost interest. In any case, sticking himself out of the balcony was a bit tiring.... Furthermore, there was always the danger of accidentally falling.... If that happened, then it would only take a day for everyone on the entire south bank to hear about it.

Time passed, and more people showed up. After about an hour, the sound of a cauldron being struck rung out, and everything went quiet. Countless eyes were all fixed on the auction stage.

Soon, a middle-aged man in a green garment appeared. Smiling, he stood there and greeted everyone with clasped hands.

“I am your humble servant Qian Song. I presume many of you Fellow Daoists are already familiar with me. I will be presiding over the auction today. The rules are the same as ever, all lots go to the highest bidder.” Without any further ado, he waved his right hand, and a glowing door rose up on the auction stage.

A young woman emerged, holding a platter, atop which was an oddly shaped rock formed of various metals.

The rock glowed with garish, multicolored light that reflected within the excited, shocked eyes of the thousands of auction attendees.

Bai Xiaochun looked closely at the rock but couldn't quite tell what it was. However, other people in the crowd seemed to know exactly what it was, and were already getting excited.

When Qian Song spoke, his voice was soft, but he boosted it with his Foundation Establishment cultivation base, ensuring that it spread out for all to hear. "Lot one is a piece of Auric Ore. Minimum bid, 300 spirit stones. Bid increment is a minimum of 50 spirit stones!"

"350 spirit stones!" someone cried out.

"400!" Almost as soon as the first bid came out, another topped it. Before long, the price reached 700 spirit stones, and the item was sold to a disciple from Violet Cauldron Peak.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the piece of ore with wide eyes, trying to figure out why it could possibly be worth 700 spirit stones. Another thing he'd noticed was that after the auction had begun, a spell formation had been activated which amplified the voices of anyone calling out bids.

"It's just a piece of metal," he thought a bit sourly as he sat there watching.

More items appeared and were sold. One of them was a green horn from a juvenile dragon, which had apparently been struck by lightning, leaving sparks of electricity coursing along its surface. It fetched a price of 8,000 spirit stones, which left Bai Xiaochun

completely shaken.

After the auction had been going for about an hour, Qian Song's voice rang out with the following words: "The next lot is a bottle of tier-2 spirit medicine. Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills, a total of ten. They are close to mid-grade, with an impurity level of eighty-one percent. Minimum price, 100 spirit stones. Bid increment is a minimum of 10 spirit stones."

Bai Xiaochun instantly perked up, and stared out at the auction floor in anticipation. Thinking nervously about how much he might make, he waited for someone to call out a bid.

However, for some reason, the only thing that met his ears was silence. Even as his heart began to pound, someone called out an opening bid.

"110 spirit stones." The bidder was an Outer Sect disciple, and the amount bid was apparently all of his savings. After calling out the bid he stared around nervously.

However, Bai Xiaochun was even more nervous than he was. That bottle of Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills had cost him about 50 spirit stones to manufacture, and if he sold it at the market, would fetch a price of 150 or 160.

At the moment, all he could do was scowl at the audience in astonishment.

Just when Qian Song was about to strike down with the auction hammer, someone else called out another price. Then, more people jumped in. In the end, the price jumped all the way to 180 spirit stones.

“180 spirit stones isn’t bad. That’s about 20 higher than at the market.” Sighing in relief, he wiped the sweat from his brow. The truth was, the price the bottle had fetched earned him a tidy profit, although it didn’t come close to the value of some of the other precious items which had gone up for bid so far.

Soon, his second bottle went up, and ended up selling for a slightly higher price, 200 spirit stones. Bai Xiaochun was very pleased.

By the time the third bottle went up, the Qi Condensation disciples were getting very excited, and more people jumped in on the bidding. In the end, Bai Xiaochun was ecstatic; the final price reached 230 spirit stones.

“More than 700 spirit stones! Now this is what I call an auction! I already have enough spirit stones to concoct a tier-3 spirit medicine.” Bai Xiaochun was an easy person to please. His sour mood from before was completely gone, and he sat there happily waiting for the premium-grade spirit medicine to appear.

“Considering the price the other bottles fetched, I think the premium-grade might get... 300 spirit stones?” After a bit of hesitation, he changed his mind.



“200 would be fine!” He nodded confidently.

Time passed. Bai Xiaochun sat there waiting until it was afternoon. There on the auction stage, Qian Song’s expression suddenly turned a bit strange. Looking around at the audience, he cleared his throat.

“The next lot is something a bit interesting.... It’s a tier-2 spirit medicine, also a Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pill. However... there’s something different about it.”

Bai Xiaochun sat there anxiously on the balcony, mind buzzing with nervousness.

# Chapter 78: What Are They Talking About?

---

People on the auction floor immediately got excited upon hearing Qian Song's announcement.

The only ones who didn't care were the Inner Sect disciples whose cultivation bases were above the eighth level of Qi Condensation, who began to chat among themselves about other topics, or simply closed their eyes to rest.

"Please take a moment to examine the pill first," Qian Song said with a dry cough. "Afterward, I will reveal the price." It was at this point that a pretty young woman emerged from the glowing door, holding a wooden box in her hands.

Excitement built as everyone craned their necks to try to get a look at exactly what type of Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pill this was that would cause such a strange expression to appear on Qian Song's face.

Bai Xiaochun was getting more and more nervous, and began to breathe heavily as he looked over at the auction stage. A moment later, the pretty young woman lifted the lid off the box and pulled out a dark violet pill.

The medicinal pill was especially conspicuous considering the fairness of her skin. It glowed with a soft light, and the three designs on its surface were especially noticeable. Also visible... was the little turtle etched next to the spirit designs.

At first, silence prevailed. But then, a huge commotion broke out.

“A threefold spirit enhancement! Heavens! Are my eyes deceiving me?!”

“That’s insane! It’s actually a tier-2 spirit medicine with a threefold spirit enhancement! I can’t believe somebody succeeded in doing such a thing!!”

“This is crazy! A spirit enhanced Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pill!!”

The voices of the flabbergasted Outer Sect disciples rose up into a cacophony that filled the entire auction floor.

“Dammit! Who actually did something like that? What a waste!”

“A threefold spirit enhancement like that? What psycho had the inclination to do such a thing!?!?”

Even the Inner Sect disciples who had been ignoring things up to this point looked over in surprise. When they saw the spirit designs running across the surface of the medicinal pill, their eyes went wide, and they gasped. Many of them even shot to their feet.

It must be stated that the success rate of spirit enhancement was not very high. A onefold enhancement was difficult enough, and a twofold enhancement was even harder. As for a threefold enhancement... it all depended on luck. Even grandmasters wouldn’t dare to claim the ability to succeed at a threefold

enhancement.

In the Spirit Stream Sect, far too many people had destroyed magical items in the process of attempting threefold spirit enhancements, much to their heartache. Because of that, most people had a love-hate relationship with spirit enhancement; whenever people did manage to succeed, they would arouse the envy of their contemporaries.

For a magical item to successfully receive a threefold spirit enhancement would make it more powerful to a shocking degree, and would make many people desire to acquire it. But now... everyone was astonished to find themselves looking at a medicinal pill which had received a threefold spirit enhancement!

Furthermore, it was a tier-2 medicinal pill!

If a gorgeous pattern were to develop on the wings of a butterfly, everyone would marvel at the spectacular beauty. But if such a design were to appear on the back of a pig... it could only be described as a huge waste!!

Mixed emotions could be seen on the faces of the onlookers as numerous thoughts ran through their minds. Many of them even clenched their fists into balls, causing veins to bulge out on their hands and faces. The Inner Sect disciples from Violet Cauldron Peak were especially pained, considering that they studied spirit enhancement as part of their cultivation.

“What luck! Somebody actually managed to perform a spirit

enhancement on a medicinal pill, and then brought it here to sell. Dammit! If I were that lucky, I would definitely have a spirit enhanced treasure!!”

Even the Foundation Establishment cultivators on the second floor were looking at the medicinal pill in front of them in shock.

Bai Xiaochun sat on the balcony watching all of this happening, somewhat surprised. He looked blankly at the enraged crowd below, some of whom were turning red in the face. He suddenly had the feeling... that he might have gone too far.... He immediately put a look of righteous indignation onto his face and then pointed at the medicinal pill angrily.

“Loser!” he shouted furiously. “What loser made that pill?!”

Off in the distance, Sun Chen was smiling wryly. When he first saw the medicinal pill, he had experienced the same feeling most people in the audience were feeling right now. But then he saw the way Bai Xiaochun was acting off in the distance, and his jaw dropped. A little bit of sweat even dripped down the side of his face.

However, it was at this point that someone in the crowd with sharp eyes happened to notice the little turtle etched into the side of the pill.

“Eee? Why does that little turtle seem so familiar...?” Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, others in the crowd began to look more closely at the pill. At first, they had all been so surprised by

the three spirit designs that they didn't look at anything else. But now they all noticed the turtle etching.

“That little turtle.... Hey, I remember! Back on Fragrant Cloud Peak, the first place spot on all of the stone steles at the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion is occupied by a little turtle!!”

“This turtle looks just like that one. The style is exactly the same. That... was etched by a person!”

“The person who concocted that pill, and then went to the insane length of performing a threefold spirit enhancement, was none other than the mysterious and unfathomable Chosen of Fragrant Cloud Peak, the little turtle!”

Cries of excitement rang up. After all, many disciples in the audience were from Fragrant Cloud Peak, and once they saw the little turtle, they were struck with astonishment.

More and more people caught sight of the turtle, and gasps rang out. People even began to rise to their feet. Although not much news about Fragrant Cloud Peak's little turtle had spread lately, he was incredibly famous. Everyone in the sect knew about him, and many people continued to speculate all the time about who exactly he was.

However, no one had been able to solve the mystery. The little turtle was simply too mysterious, so mysterious that apparently no one knew his true identity. He liked to keep an extremely low profile, and was indifferent to the outside world, paying virtually

no attention to it at all.

But all of a sudden... he had made another appearance!

Furthermore, he had chosen to completely shake the entire auction, and shock everyone who attended.

Zhou Xinqi was there in the crowd, her eyes shining brightly as she looked at the medicinal pill. Her chest heaved, and various emotions coursed through her.

“So, you finally show your face,” she murmured to herself. “A Chosen like you cannot remain hidden forever within the sea of people. You may want to remain out of sight, but your incredible talents have doomed you to be revealed, no matter how much you try to hide. I will find out who you are, one day!” Zhou Xinqi had spent a lot of time secretly investigating the little turtle. For a time, she had suspected Bai Xiaochun, but soon decided that it couldn’t be him, and made up her own version of who the little turtle was. He was a cold, proud man who would never taint his own name because of a desire to be famous.

Zhou Xinqi actually wasn’t the only one who had come to such a conclusion. Most people felt the same, even Hou Xiaomei. Of course, much of that was because of how much Bai Xiaochun himself had propagated stories about the little turtle.

Many people had even analyzed why he used a turtle as his mark. The explanation was that he had a reserved personality, but also maintained lofty aspirations. Like turtles, his medicinal pills

would survive for thousands of years into the future.

Hou Xiaomei stood not too far off in the distance, her eyes wide with adoration. Because of Bai Xiaochun's urgings, she worshiped the little turtle more than anyone else in the sect. In fact, she'd even found other disciples like herself, and had formed something of a club, which they called the Little Turtle League.

"What?! The little turtle!" Hou Xiaomei nearly jumped up into the air in excitement as she pointed at the auction stage.

The entire auction floor had devolved into chaos. Now, people no longer said even a single comment in anger or skepticism. Instead, profound expressions appeared on their faces.

"He definitely pursues excellence to the extreme!"

"A proud Chosen such as the little turtle would never perform a spirit enhancement on a medicinal pill just to sell it at auction. He seeks the quintessence of the Dao of medicine. He did it as a means of research, because of his incredible focus!"

Even the Inner Sect disciples who had been in such pain earlier were now heaving sighs and looking at each other in dismay. All of them had to admit they were incapable of pulling off a threefold spirit enhancement.

"Now I understand what type of Chosen he is. He's not insane, nor is he showing off. He has grand aspirations. He's completely



focused! He wants his medicinal pills to reach the ultimate pinnacle!”

“Incredible! Shocking! This level of focus, this level of willpower, this type of perfect pill... we can all strive to imitate him!”

“A threefold spirit enhancement can raise an object’s quality by three grades. That means... that this medicinal pill was originally mid-grade. The little turtle’s skill in medicine concocting has already far surpassed my own. He definitely deserves his reputation!”

“That medicinal pill should be kept as souvenir! I must have it!” The Inner Sect disciples’ eyes shone with a bright light. Although the pill wasn’t suitable for them to consume, it could fill them with inspiration.

Looking at a pill like that made them feel as if they were looking at a Chosen who cared not for fame or fortune, who was completely focused, who strove only after the Dao of medicine.

Seeing how quickly the conversation had changed, Bai Xiaochun, who had been joining along in the public outrage, suddenly stared around with wide eyes. After hearing what people were saying, his face began to turn red.

“What... what are they talking about...?” he thought, trembling. He had never before realized how superior he was. Now that he suddenly saw the light, he had the urge to yell at the top of his lungs, to tell everyone around him that he was the famous Lord

Turtle!

However, it was at this point that Qian Song cleared his throat and smiled.

“As all of you can see, this pill has great symbolic meaning. Minimum bid, 500 spirit stones. Bid increment is a minimum of 50 spirit stones!”

Bai Xiaochun gasped when he heard the astronomical price. Most Outer Sect disciples couldn't even afford that many spirit stones.

“600 spirit stones!”

“700 spirit stones! That pill contains the essence of the Dao of medicine! I must acquire it!”

“800! Who dares to top me!?” The Inner Sect disciples immediately began to call out prices, and soon everyone was in an uproar.

Bids continued to be called out, and soon the price reached 1,500 spirit stones. Bai Xiaochun's throat was dry, and he was panting in disbelief.

“Crazy!” he mouthed in excitement. “They're all crazy.... Wait, let's get a bit more crazy, people.... Come on!! Everybody join in!”

“1,800 spirit stones.” That bid came from Zhou Xinqi, causing numerous people to look over in her direction. Bai Xiaochun even began to cheer her on.

The price had already reached the limit of what was possible for Inner Sect disciples to afford. Although none of them wished to let the pill go, they had no choice but to sigh. After all, Zhou Xinqi was already a Chosen in the Dao of medicine. Since she wanted the pill, none of the other disciples were willing to compete with her.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with the price, and had to hold himself back from running over to Qian Song, grabbing the auction hammer, and banging it down to end the bidding. However, it was at this point that the stubborn and determined voice of young woman rang out, fiery as a pepper.

“I am Hou Xiaomei of the Hou Clan. I bid 3,000 spirit stones!”

## Chapter 79: Xiaochun, We Believe You

---

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide as his mind filled with the thought of 3,000 spirit stones.... He looked over at Hou Xiaomei, eyes shining, and suddenly felt the desire to run over, hug her, give her three thousand thumbs up and tell her... "Great job!"

When the rest of the disciples on the auction floor heard that huge price coming out of Hou Xiaomei's mouth, the commotion instantly ceased, and jaws dropped. They looked over to find Hou Xiaomei standing there, hands on her hips, chest heaving, looking very fair and delicate. She was pretty, but had a proud look on her face, and looked like a blazing hot pepper.

Sticking her chin out, she looked over at Zhou Xinqi with a look that said, I'm from the Hou Clan, and I'm not scared of anyone! Plus, I'm rich!

The overall effect wasn't off-putting, but rather, made her seem quite cute.

Quite a few people broke out into smiles at the sight, whereas others were even more shocked than before.

"3,100 spirit stones!" Zhou Xinqi said coolly, her expression growing a bit colder.

"The little turtle is very important to me!" Hou Xiaomei said. "I don't care how expensive it is, any pill made by him must belong to me. Hmph! 4,000 spirit stones! I'm from the Hou Clan, and I have

plenty of money to go around!” She especially emphasized the last sentence. Next to her, Hou Yunfei bowed his head in nervous embarrassment. He wasn’t sure why his little sister worshipped the little turtle with such frenzied devotion....

Zhou Xinqi’s fans couldn’t watch this go on, and many of them began to cry out that only a loser would spend so much money on a tier-2 spirit medicine.

Hou Xiaomei wasn’t too happy to hear such things. Sticking her chest out and planting her hands on her hips, she barked, “I’ve got a lot of spirit stones, so you can just bite me!”

As Bai Xiaochun watched the events unfold, he couldn’t help but muse that he had made the right decision to pull Hou Xiaomei off the crooked path and onto the way of righteousness.

Zhou Xinqi frowned. Unfortunately, she didn’t have that many spirit stones, and so finally, she had no choice but to give up.

Hou Xiaomei was delighted that Zhou Xinqi didn’t make any more bids. The truth was that she didn’t have as many spirit stones as she had implied. She had only said so in front of so many people in the hopes that it would force her clan’s patriarch to accommodate her.

In the end, Hou Xiaomei was very pleased to have won the threefold spirit enhanced medicinal pill.

Bai Xiaochun was also very pleased. Looking admiringly at Hou Xiaomei, he cleared his throat. In his opinion, considering how much she admired him, it would be improper not to tell her about his true identity.

Having reached this conclusion, and seeing that the first day of the auction was coming to an end, he decided that now was the time to go out and proclaim his identity to the public.

Meanwhile, backstage, various patriarchs from the cultivator clans were gathered, having been tasked with standing guard over the auction. One of them was a middle-aged man, who was currently coughing dryly as he looked around wryly at his fellow patriarchs.

“Well... my granddaughter sure is stubborn. I’m afraid she’s made a bit of a fool of herself in front of all of you.” With that, he bitterly produced a large sum of spirit stones which he put off to the side.

“What an innocent girl!” The other patriarchs all laughed good-naturedly.

The first day of the auction was over, and although there were more days to come, Bai Xiaochun had already sold his medicinal pills, so he didn’t plan to return. He walked over to the entrance of the auction and stood there watching everyone filing out of the auction house.

Virtually all of them were excitedly discussing the matter of the

## Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pill.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun caught sight of Zhou Xinqi. He wanted to go encourage her not to feel disheartened, but as soon as he took a step forward to head in her direction, she looked over and saw him coming. Without another word, she transformed into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun stopped in place, feeling a bit depressed. But then he heard a voice coming from behind him.

“Big bro Xiaochun!” It was Hou Xiaomei, who came bouncing over happily through the crowd, followed by Hou Yunfei, who was also smiling.

Bai Xiaochun looked away from Zhou Xinqi and gave Hou Xiaomei a smile of praise. Looking very much like a member of the senior generation, he patted her on the head.

“Hey there, chaste little sister. I have to say, you did a great job. The way you won that final item in the auction was very domineering!”

Hou Xiaomei’s face turned bright red. Seeming to recall something all of a sudden, she pulled out the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pill.

“Big bro Xiaochun, look! This medicinal pill was concocted by the little turtle. Would you like it? Here, take it. Didn’t you say before

that you also adore the little turtle? I bought this pill just for you!” Anyone who saw the expression on her face would be moved. Holding out the pill to Bai Xiaochun, she looked at him with keen anticipation, as if he were the only thing that existed in the world.

When Hou Yunfei saw this, his gaze softened, and he smiled, but didn’t say anything.

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped. Never could he have imagined that Hou Xiaomei’s goal in winning the medicinal pill was to give it to him. It was very moving. Seeing that they were surrounded by quite a few people, he took a deep breath and put a solemn expression on his face.

Eyes filling with determination, he clasped his hands behind his back like a powerful hero, a posture he had long since become very familiar with adopting.

“Xiaomei,” he said, “I need to reveal a very big secret!”

Hou Xiaomei looked shocked, as did Hou Yunfei.

“What secret?” Hou Xiaomei asked curiously.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat loudly, stuck out his chin, and swished his sleeve.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, am he who shocks ghosts and gods, the preeminently famous, mysterious and unfathomable... the great



and mighty... Lord Turtle!!” He then threw his head back and laughed uproariously. The words he had just uttered had been kept locked inside of him for far too long, and it felt wonderful to speak them out in the open, especially considering he was speaking them to the person who adored him the most, Hou Xiaomei, and in front of such a large audience of onlookers.

Most importantly, it wasn't proper to allow the person who worshipped him the most fervently to be kept in the dark, especially when her idol was standing directly in front of her! Bai Xiaochun stared up at the clouds above, looking very lonely. However, his ears twitched a bit as he waited to hear the shocked reactions of Hou Xiaomei and the rest of the crowd.

He was already formulating the words he would use in response to the impending commotion.

However, after a very long moment passed, not a sound could be heard. Everything was completely silent. Surprised, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but look back from the clouds toward Hou Xiaomei and Hou Yunfei.

Hou Xiaomei stood there with wide eyes, and Hou Yunfei was similarly shocked. As they stared mutely at Bai Xiaochun, the surrounding disciples looked on with strange expressions on their faces.

“The little turtle is indifferent to worldly affairs,” someone said, “like a cloud floating in the sky. Now Sect Uncle Bai is calling himself the little turtle? Yeah right.... Come on, let's go.”

An unsightly expression could be seen on Bai Xiaochun's face, and he took a deep breath in preparation to make an explanation.

"Xiaochun, are you alright?" Hou Yunfei asked. Worried, he patted Bai Xiaochun on the head.

"I really am the little turtle!" Bai Xiaochun said anxiously.

"Oh?" Hou Yunfei replied, a strange expression on his face. He quickly nodded. "Sure, sure. You're the little turtle...."

At this point, Hou Xiaomei gazed at Big bro Xiaochun and softly said, "Big bro Xiaochun, you told me before that the little turtle is like a cloud in the sky, someone who doesn't care at all about worldly matters.... Actually, in my heart, you're just as important as he is. You don't need to pretend to be him...."

"But I really am the—"

Before he could finish speaking, Hou Yunfei looked at him somberly and clasped his arm. "Xiaochun, we believe you!"

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide. "I really—"

Before he could finish, Hou Yunfei's expression turned more serious. "Xiaochun. We really believe you!"

“I–” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes began to glaze over as a feeling of disheartenment filled him. No matter how he tried to explain the situation, it wouldn’t do any good. Things were going completely different than he’d imagined. Dejected, he turned slowly and trudged away, somehow returning to the sect.

Back in his courtyard, he stared blankly up into the sky, an expression of grief on his face.

“But I really am Lord Turtle....” he murmured, feeling very maligned. He had long dreamed about proclaiming his identity publicly, but now that dream was in tatters.

After a while, he came to the conclusion that the problem lay in the fact that he had worked so hard over the years to inflate the image of the little turtle in the minds of the people.... To them, the little turtle was a completely proud and extraordinary individual.

More precisely, thanks to the tireless efforts of Hou Xiaomei, the little turtle had already been turned into something of a deity....

After a while, Bai Xiaochun begrudgingly went to find Xu Baocai to explain the truth. Afterward, Xu Baocai stared at him blankly for a moment... and then nodded repeatedly and said that he believed him.

Bai Xiaochun scowled miserably all the way back to his courtyard, where he once again stood there feeling empty.

A few days later, Sun Chen came to visit. Bai Xiaochun immediately perked up. Suddenly, he had hope, hope that Sun Chen would remember who it was that had delivered the medicinal pill up to be auctioned off.

However, before he could even say anything, Sun Chen handed over the spirit stones, then clasped hands and bowed deeply. Expression solemn, he said, “Brother Bai, I’m not sure which honored Chosen concocted that pill. The Sun Clan patriarch was quite shocked by the matter. We know that the only way to contact that Chosen is via you, Brother Bai. Otherwise, you wouldn’t have been the one to deliver his medicinal pill.

“Brother Bai, could you please pass word to him that the Sun Clan hopes to have a longstanding friendship with him? If he needs any help selling medicinal pills in the future, we will use all our power to help him!

“Another thing, Brother Bai. Could you please pass word to the Chosen that I understand he doesn’t seek fame and fortune, and purposely avoids big commotions? He is like a cloud in the sky, seeking perfection in the Dao of medicine. A person like him will surely reach incredible heights in the future. Therefore, our Sun Clan would be happy to handle all matters relating to the outside world for him.” Sun Chen clasped hands and bowed deeply once again. When he looked up, he noticed that Bai Xiaochun’s expression was completely blank. When that expression didn’t change, Sun Chen once again clasped hands, bowed, and then took his leave.

Inwardly, he sighed as he thought about how high Bai Xiaochun’s

position was in the Spirit Stream Sect, and how the mysterious, unfathomable figure that no one else knew, actually had dealings with him.

From the very beginning, he had never even considered that Bai Xiaochun might actually be the little turtle. Their personalities were too different. After all, it wasn't just Spirit Stream Sect disciples who knew about the little turtle. The cultivator clans on the outside were also aware of him. All of them had performed their own investigations, and had come to similar conclusions as Zhou Xinqi.

By the time Bai Xiaochun regained his composure, the moon hung high in the sky. Sighing deeply, he leapt up onto the bamboo fence that surrounded his courtyard. Clasp ing his hands behind his back, he looked up at the starry sky, his long black hair swaying in the wind and his robes rustling.

“I never imagined that deep within me was the desire to shun worldly matters. I am like a cloud which floats in the sky. Ai. I shouldn't have kept things hidden so well. Sometimes, being superior really is truly lonely.” As he stood there in the moonlight, he flicked his sleeve, and truly looked like a lonely hero.

# Chapter 80: The Talents Of Big Fatty Zhang

---

Now that he had plenty of spirit stones, Bai Xiaochun didn't want to worry about the issue of the little turtle any more. His heart had already been pierced a thousand times over by what had occurred. Now, the only thing left to do was go to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion and heal by immersing himself in pill concocting.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun's ability to concoct tier-2 spirit medicine had been refined to perfection. His success rate was shockingly high, and he was already beginning to work on tier-3 medicine.

Rumbling sounds filled his workstation as he went about his work. On one occasion, something completely unexpected occurred when the pill furnace rocketed into the air and slammed into the wall before exploding, leaving a small crater behind.

However, that was almost nothing compared to the time when an exploding pill furnace sent out smoke that not even the workshop's protective spell formation could stop. It filled nearly half of the Medicine Concocting Pavilion, causing everyone inside to run out, coughing and cursing the entire time.

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun also ran out in similar fashion, and in the end, no one was completely sure who had caused the entire disaster.

Feeling quite frustrated, Bai Xiaochun carefully returned to his workstation and began to work on another batch of tier-3 spirit

medicine. Gradually, a strange expression appeared on his face as he realized he often tended to produce bizarre spirit medicines. For example, there was the time he created the medicine which had attracted hordes of ants. And then there was his Aphrodisiac Pill....

The truth was, all of the strange pills he concocted were all terrifying.

“Could it be because I refuse to use a set medicine formula in my concocting? Every time I do my work, I follow my instincts, and that’s what leads to the strange transformations? Or maybe I’m just so naturally talented that God is jealous and intentionally causes problems for me?” Currently, a few dozen brightly colored medicinal pills were laid out in front of Bai Xiaochun, which he looked down at, frowning.

None of them were spherical. Some were cube-shaped, and others looked like malformed lumps of clay. Clearly, they were not ordinary spirit medicines, and yet, each and every one let off a strong medicinal aroma....

Even if Bai Xiaochun were a hundred times braver than he was, he wouldn’t dare to personally consume any of them. It was impossible to say what unimaginable effects they might produce.

“I want to achieve the ultimate pinnacle in the Dao of medicine. I am like a cloud in the sky, floating about effortlessly, ignoring the material world. The Dao of medicine is a path strewn with obstacles, so I must not fear. I just have to endure. That is the new me, a new Bai Xiaochun.” With that, determination appeared on his face. Looking as if he were searching for the deeper truths in

life, he put the pills away and once again began his concocting work.

He spent nearly half a day on the next batch. Unfortunately, he had reached the point where there were few types of medicine that he could continue to work on. It was simply too dangerous. His pill furnace would explode every time, leaving significant damage in its wake. Scowling, he paid some spirit stones in compensation, at which time he was politely asked to leave the Medicine Concocting Pavilion.

He was just about to call upon his status as the Junior Brother of the sect leader and demand to be allowed to stay, when he realized that Big Fatty Zhang had messaged him via jade slip. Apparently he'd come to Bai Xiaochun's residence looking for him, and was wondering where he'd gone off to.

Seeing that Big Fatty Zhang had come to visit, Bai Xiaochun left the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. Sighing, he began to walk down one of the narrow mountain paths.

“If I want to pursue the Dao of medicine to the pinnacle, then I will surely face obstacles along the way. I, Bai Xiaochun, am like a floating cloud. I will not surrender!” Sticking his chest out and raising his head, he walked forward for a bit until he realized that something seemed off. At this time of day, the sect was usually a busy place. But right now, Fragrant Cloud Peak was very quiet. Looking around, he noticed that not a single disciple of the sixth level of Qi Condensation or higher could be seen. Everyone present was of the fifth level or lower.



Shocked, he hurried back to his residence. Even as he approached from a distance, he saw a tall, skinny young man pacing back and forth excitedly in front of the main gate.

That young man was none other than Big Fatty Zhang, who had lost a significant amount of weight.

“Eldest Brother,” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed in greeting, hurrying forward.

“Ninth Junior Brother!” Big Fatty Zhang replied, turning to look at Bai Xiaochun and laughing loudly. Big Fatty Zhang didn’t care at all that Bai Xiaochun was now the Junior Brother of the sect leader. To Big Fatty Zhang, he was still his little Junior Brother.

Bai Xiaochun dragged him into the courtyard, where they sat down to chat. Curious, Bai Xiaochun said, “Eldest Brother, you hardly ever come to visit. What brought you over? Is there something you need my help with? Just say the word!”

Bai Xiaochun had long since come to view Big Fatty Zhang as a true older brother. Whenever he thought back to their days together in the Ovens, he was always left with a warm feeling.

Big Fatty Zhang cleared his throat, but was unable to prevent the excitement and pride from showing on his face. Looking over, he slapped himself proudly on the chest. Back in the Ovens, it would have resulted in the sound of jiggling flesh, but now, only the creaking of bones could be heard. Even still, Big Fatty Zhang seemed enlivened.

“Ninth Junior Brother, I have a huge secret to tell you!”

As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard that a huge secret was involved, his eyes went wide, and he began to pay rapt attention.

Sounding very lofty, Big Fatty Zhang went on to say, “From now on, I, Big Fatty Zhang, am definitely going to be famous in the Spirit Stream Sect. Everyone will know my name. Tons of disciples will be trying to get on my good side. In fact, even the Foundation Establishment seniors will probably treat me with the utmost respect.”

“Oh?” Bai Xiaochun said, looking surprised. “What’s going on? Are you also the little turtle?”

Glowing with exuberation, Big Fatty Zhang took a deep breath and lowered his voice. “Little turtle? Pshh. Ninth Junior Brother, you know that my Master is the Peak Lord of Violet Cauldron Peak, Xu Meixiang, right?”

Bai Xiaochun nodded. He had known who Big Fatty Zhang’s master was for some time, and also knew that she was the reason he had lost so much weight. She didn’t like fat people, although that had also led Bai Xiaochun to consider some other strange possibilities regarding the situation.

“Do you know what my Master is best at?” Big Fatty Zhang continued. “Spirit enhancement! And do you know what I’m studying from my Master? Spirit enhancement!”

“Hahaha! I, Big Fatty Zhang, happen to be blessed with incredible natural talent when it comes to spirit enhancement. My talent is so extraordinary that even my Master was completely shocked, and praised me to no end! Today, she actually said that it would only be a few more years before I’m the number one grandmaster of spirit enhancement in the entire Spirit Stream Sect!” Big Fatty Zhang rose to his feet, looking excitedly up into the sky, boiling with excitement. It was as if he were the most important being in existence.

Bai Xiaochun blinked. Seeing Big Fatty Zhang’s mighty pose, he quickly plastered an adoring expression on his face and exclaimed, “Spirit enhancement?!”

Bai Xiaochun’s reaction made Big Fatty Zhang even happier. Slapping his shoulder, he said, “Ninth Junior Brother, from here on out, lots of people are going to be asking me to do spirit enhancements. If I don’t like them, I’ll refuse no matter what. If I do like them, then I’ll charge them an arm and a leg! But you and Third Fatty are both from the Ovens. For the rest of my life, I won’t charge you a single spirit stone. We’re family, so as long as you provide the ingredients, I’ll perform spirit enhancements for you for free!”

Big Fatty Zhang seemed high-spirited and full of mettle. From the moment he arrived at Violet Cauldron Peak, he had felt suppressed, but now that he knew he had a talent for spirit enhancement, he was elated. This was actually the first time he had ever come to visit Bai Xiaochun.

“Elder Brother, you’re incredible!!” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed, looking ecstatic.

“Come, come,” said Big Fatty Zhang. “Give me something, anything. I’ll do a onefold enhancement right here. With one of my weapons, you’ll definitely get into the south bank’s top ten during the qualifying rounds a few months from now. Then you can represent the south bank to fight the north bank in the Chosen battles!”

“Uh....” Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. Seeing how excited Big Fatty Zhang was, he fished around in his bag of holding for a bit, and then pulled out one of the Spirit Stream Sect’s ordinary flying swords, of which he had a few. He quickly handed it over to Big Fatty Zhang.

Big Fatty Zhang took a deep breath and then slapped his bag of holding, causing a few pieces of ore to fly out, which then floated around the sword.

Then he closed his eyes, and unleashed the explosive power of his cultivation base. Although his cultivation base couldn’t quite match up to Bai Xiaochun’s, he was already in the great circle of the sixth level of Qi Condensation. His hair whipped about as he waved his left hand, causing silver light to shine out.

As soon as the light appeared, a wind sprang up, and the entire area seemed to fill with fluctuations of spiritual energy. The energy streamed toward the pieces of ore, which filtered the energy before it passed on toward Big Fatty Zhang’s left hand. At the same time, the pieces of ore began to melt. In a short time, they

were already half gone.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered. This was his first time ever watching as someone performed a spirit enhancement, and the process was very different than when he used the turtle-wok. Apparently, the spirit enhancer would communicate directly with heaven and earth, and then filter its explosive power through the ore to soften it.

Soon, Big Fatty Zhang began to shake. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he took a deep breath, and his eyes snapped open. Then, blinding silver light shot out from his hand to sweep over the sword.

“Spirit Actuation!”

The air seemed to vibrate as the silver light shooting out from Big Fatty Zhang's hand bored into the flying sword. In the blink of an eye, the entire sword had turned silver.

The sight was shocking to say the least, and Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but gasp.

Panting, Big Fatty Zhang handed the flying sword over to Bai Xiaochun.

“Take it,” he said, his voice brimming with confidence. “The sword's spirit has already been actuated. If you pour some more spiritual power into it to do a spirit test, the silver designs should

appear!” With that, he mopped the sweat off of his forehead.

Bai Xiaochun took the flying sword and then excitedly poured some spiritual power into it. Instantly, cracking sounds could be heard as silver lines appeared on the surface of the sword. Moments later though, they faded away, and then cracks began to spread out, as if the sword couldn’t contain the energy of heaven and earth which had been imbued into it. A moment later, it had transformed into nothing but a lump of slag.

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, looking surprised. Big Fatty Zhang’s jaw dropped, and the two of them exchanged glances.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, and was just about to say that it had been a low quality sword to begin with, when Big Fatty Zhang grabbed it and looked it over with wide eyes. After a moment, he stamped his foot angrily.

“I made a mistake. I didn’t control the fusion with the spirit iron. The energy of heaven and earth was a bit too volatile. Ah, it doesn’t matter. Alright Ninth Junior Brother, give me another flying sword, I’ll try again.” Big Fatty Zhang stared at Bai Xiaochun with bloodshot eyes.

Bai Xiaochun produced another flying sword, whereupon Big Fatty Zhang took a deep breath. Expression very serious, he went through the process again, until the sword glowed with silver light. Then he handed it back to Bai Xiaochun.

“Why don’t... why don’t you do the test, Eldest Brother?” Bai

Xiaochun said hesitantly.

Voice solemn, Big Fatty Zhang said, “The first major rule of spirit enhancement is that unless the object belongs to the spirit enhancer, then he must not do the spirit test himself! It’s a set rule that I can’t violate. If I break the taboo, it will lead to endless troubles.”

Seeing how determined Big Fatty Zhang was, Bai Xiaochun nervously took the sword. He truly wanted it to work this time, otherwise it would be a significant blow to Big Fatty Zhang.

After a moment of thought, he said, “Hm... Eldest Brother, why don’t you wait here for a moment. I’ll go to into my room to do the test. I think I put too much thought into it before and got too nervous.”

# Chapter 81: Will-Spirit Grand Magic

---

Big Fatty Zhang was already starting to get nervous. However, after hearing Bai Xiaochun's suggestions, he realized that it made sense, and nodded in agreement.

Clearing his throat, he tried to pretend that he wasn't nervous at all. "Of course. As my Master said, I shouldn't be there to see whether the enhancement succeeds or not. Ninth Junior Brother, hurry inside and try out the spirit test."

Bai Xiaochun turned and hurried inside. Frowning, he looked down at the flying sword. Worried about Big Fatty Zhang getting disappointed, he didn't attempt any test, but instead, performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing the turtle-wok to appear.

"Ai. Eldest Brother has been under too much pressure from the very beginning. He's finally got some confidence back, so I can't let him leave disappointed. I wonder if using the turtle-wok will make the enhancement of this flying sword a success." Muttering to himself, he started a one-colored flame and then threw the untested flying sword into the wok.

Silver light glittered brightly, after which he put the turtle-wok away. Gritting his teeth, he poured some of his spiritual energy into the sword, whereupon the silver light condensed into a single silver design.

"It worked!" he thought, although he wasn't sure whether it was



because of what Big Fatty Zhang had done, or whether it was because of his own work. He quickly pushed the door open and rushed out. “Eldest Brother! It worked. It worked! You’re so awesome, Eldest Brother!”

Big Fatty Zhang had been standing there nervously in the courtyard, wondering what the result would be. As soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun, a tremor ran through him. Then he saw the silver design on the flying sword. Slapping his thigh, he threw his head back and laughed loudly.

“Well, how did it turn out? It’s just like I said. I didn’t control the power last time. Back on Violet Cauldron Peak, I successfully enhanced three weapons already. Even my Master couldn’t help but praise my talent. And here I did it again, Ninth Junior Brother!” Big Fatty Zhang excitedly grabbed the sword from Bai Xiaochun to look at it.

Bai Xiaochun stood off to the side, looking admiringly at Big Fatty Zhang. Seeing Big Fatty Zhang look so excited, he sighed in contentment.

“Alright, your Elder Brother is in a good mood now. I’m going to enhance it once more. This sword is going to have a twofold spirit enhancement!”

Bai Xiaochun had the feeling that such an attempt wasn’t a very good idea. If he recalled correctly, there were a lot of sect rules and taboos regarding spirit enhancement. “Eldest Brother, why don’t we try that some other time....”

“No, it’s fine!” Big Fatty Zhang said decisively. Holding the sword in hand, he began to concentrate and build up energy.

This second attempt at spirit enhancement was clearly much more difficult, and he had to use all of the ores he possessed. He began to tremble, and even consumed some medicinal pills before finally managing to draw upon enough of the energy of heaven and earth to begin the process. When he poured the energy into the sword, dazzling silver light shone out, after which Big Fatty Zhang sat down heavily onto the ground, panting.

However, his eyes shone with excitement as he handed the sword to Bai Xiaochun.

“Go ahead and test it!”

Bai Xiaochun frowned as he took the sword. However, before he could test it, Big Fatty Zhang reached out and grabbed his hand.

“Don’t test it here,” he said solemnly. “Remember, Ninth Junior Brother, the most important part of the spirit testing process is the feeling you have. When the moment feels right, it’s like having the assistance of the gods. Since you succeeded in your room last time, that’s where you should test it this time!”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times at how much Big Fatty Zhang seemed to know about spirit enhancement. Nodding, he trotted back to his room thoughtfully.

“Eldest Brother might actually be really good at spirit enhancement. It’s hard to say. Just now, he seemed to have succeeded, even without any help from my turtle-wok.” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he decided not to put the flying sword into the turtle-wok. Instead, he simply poured some spiritual power directly into the sword.

In the blink of an eye, silver light flashed. But then, it rapidly dimmed. Cracking sounds rang out, and the sword was reduced to useless slag.

Even as Bai Xiaochun frowned anxiously, he could hear Big Fatty Zhang talking outside.

“Ninth Junior Brother, I just saw some silver light. What happened. Did it succeed?”

“Um... I didn’t test it yet,” Bai Xiaochun replied quickly. “Let me do it now....”

Big Fatty Zhang stood there quietly outside, bitter nervousness written across his face. He was no idiot, and was quite certain that he’d seen silver light shining out of the window of Bai Xiaochun’s log cabin moments before.

Sighing, he assumed that Bai Xiaochun simply didn’t want to admit that it had been a failure. Taking a deep breath, he called out, “I know that you performed the test, Ninth Junior Brother. It’s fine. I’ll... I’ll just take my leave now.”

Upon arriving, Big Fatty Zhang had been bursting with excitement, but the blow he had just received left him sinking into despondency.

He was aware that he had acted rashly. According to his Master, spirit enhancement was a very mysterious magical technique, and to achieve a perfect success rate with it was impossible. Furthermore, in the cultivation world, there was a strange phenomenon. Apparently... people who succeeded once would find it easier to succeed in the future, whereas people who failed would have the opposite experience.

It sounded strange, but the truth was that it came down to the power of will. It was a mysterious thing, and the more confidence one possessed, the more likely one was to succeed.

When it came to the world of spirit enhancement, there were two main techniques that could be cultivated. One was the orthodox method, in which the spirit enhancer was responsible for only the initial spirit enhancement. He would not personally perform the spirit test. Instead, the object would be given to the owner, who would perform the spirit test out of the spirit enhancer's presence.

That way, success or failure wouldn't affect the mental state of the spirit enhancer. Without having been corrupted by the sight of the result, the spirit enhancer would be able to forget about the matter, and maintain a calm heart.

However, there was another, more extreme method that was

cultivated. It was called the Will-Spirit Grand Magic. It focused on the profound and mysterious power of will. In that method, the spirit enhancer would take great care to watch the outcome of the spirit enhancement. That way, the more successes they experienced, the more shocking their spirit enhancement abilities would become. It was an extreme method, and failure could have a very extreme negative impact on the spirit enhancer, even to the point of ruining their talents altogether.

Even still, quite a few people attempted to use that method. Even Big Fatty Zhang's Master Xu Meixiang had to admit that if someone cultivated such an extreme method of spirit enhancement, they could achieve heaven-defying results. Their power of will, and their self-confidence, would achieve monumentally spectacular results.

The Spirit Stream Sect's sect-protecting treasure, the Heavenhorn Sword, which had received a tenfold spirit enhancement, had been produced by just such an eccentric spirit enhancer, thousands of years in the past.

Big Fatty Zhang smiled bitterly. He well understood that on Violet Cauldron Peak, the orthodox method of cultivation was preferred. By allowing himself to be overcome by excitement, he had made a huge mistake. The calmness in his heart had been disturbed, and it would take quite some time to recover.

Bai Xiaochun could see Big Fatty Zhang's dejected posture through the window. Unwilling to allow him to be so disappointed, he gritted his teeth and produced an identical flying sword from within his bag of holding. Then he pulled out the

turtle-wok and quickly performed a twofold spirit enhancement.

By that point, the bitter Big Fatty Zhang had placed his hand onto the gate of the courtyard and was about to leave. All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun's elated voice rang out.

"Eldest Brother, it worked!!" The door of the log cabin slammed open as Bai Xiaochun rushed out, overjoyed, holding a flying sword with two silver designs visible on its surface.

"Really?!" A tremor ran through Big Fatty Zhang as he spun to look at the flying sword. Then he began to shake, a look of both excitement and disbelief growing in his eyes.

"Hahaha! I really am a Chosen among spirit enhancers. A twofold spirit enhancement! I can't believe it! I succeeded!!'

He wrapped Bai Xiaochun up into a bear hug, tears of joy streaming down his face. The truth was that his latent talent was only average; if it weren't for the deep connections between his family and his Master, he would never have been admitted into the Spirit Stream Sect.

It was only because of the precious materials back in the Ovens that he'd been able to cultivate to the great circle of the third level of Qi Condensation. After joining the Outer Sect, he had no such precious materials, and thus found cultivation to be very difficult. He could only watch as Third Fatty Hei and Bai Xiaochun both surpassed him, and although he was happy for them, he was very disappointed in himself.

Now that he turned out to be talented in spirit enhancement, the joy he felt was unimaginable. He suddenly felt useful. Filled with excitement, he threw his head back and laughed loudly, feeling the confidence wash through him. As it did, a strange power seemed to build up... which was none other than the intangible power of will.

Spirit enhancement was an extreme path to follow; the more you succeeded, the more confidence you had. The stronger your power of will, the more you would succeed!

Perhaps the mere belief that success was possible would help one to climb the steps of success, and breed that most mysterious power of will.

Big Fatty Zhang left excitedly, holding his head proudly. Bai Xiaochun watched him go, then stood there in his courtyard wondering if he'd done the right thing. In the end, he decided that as long as Big Fatty Zhang was happy, then he couldn't be in the wrong.

A few days after Big Fatty Zhang left, Bai Xiaochun got some new information from Xu Baocai. Apparently, the reason why fewer people could be seen on Fragrant Cloud Peak was that all of the disciples from the sixth level of Qi Condensation and higher had gone into secluded meditation, hoping to break through to the eighth level in preparation for the Chosen battles, which happened only once every thirty years!

The joint north and south bank Chosen battles were only about

three months away, and would be the focus of attention of the entire Spirit Stream Sect. Throughout the Eastwood Continent, the cultivator clans and other small sects would also be paying close attention to the results.

During the Chosen battles, Outer Sect Chosen from both the north and south banks would fight each other in an attempt to claim the top ten spots. All of the top male and female disciples would rise up like dragons and phoenixes, hoping to be promoted into the Inner Sect. Whether in terms of personal fame or the approval of the sect, disciples who ascended to the Inner Sect in this fashion were viewed completely differently than other disciples.

Every thirty years, the top ten Chosen of the generation would always move on to greater glory. They were the outstanding talents, famous and revered far and near. Even other sects with status similar to the Spirit Stream Sect would acknowledge them.

Anyone who could be ranked in the top ten in the Chosen battles would also receive handsome compensation from the sect. Word had it that the prize in merit points reached into the tens of thousands, not to mention the other precious materials that would be given out. Furthermore, there was also the chance to enter the sect's arcane pocket realm.

Everyone was moved by the possibilities at hand.

Beyond all that, the best of the best would have the chance to pursue a spot in the legendary Legacy Echelon. One requirement was to be in the top ten of the Chosen battles, which was in turn



another motivating factor to all disciples.

Before the Chosen battles, of course, were the qualifying rounds. Both the north and south banks would have their own qualifying rounds, during which they would select the ten best disciples to move on to the final Chosen battles.

The cultivation base requirement was set at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. Only disciples of that level could participate. There were two main requirements to enter the Inner Sect: first, to be in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and second, to pass a trial by fire. Normally speaking, there were a variety of trials by fire which could be attempted to get into the Inner Sect. However, the Chosen battles which occurred every thirty years were the most difficult of them all, and also the most watched in all the sect!

Of the numerous Outer Sect disciples who made the attempt, most would not be promoted. Only those who made it into the top hundred in the qualifying round would get into the Inner Sect. As for the top ten, they qualified to participate in the Chosen battles for the entire Spirit Stream Sect.

Shangguan Tianyou, Lu Tianlei, and Zhou Xinqi were all people who wanted to get into the south bank's top ten, and then fight with the Chosen from the north bank. If they could become Inner Sect disciples in such a way, then they would have a shot at eventually reaching the Legacy Echelon.

## Chapter 82: South Bank Chosen

---

During the past thousand years, the south bank had always been outdone by the north bank. In all of the Outer Sect Chosen battles which had been held, the majority of the final top ten were north bank disciples. The south bank had never been able to achieve dominance, much less take the first place spot, which went to the north bank each and every time.

One reason was that the north bank had four mountain peaks, while the south bank only had three. More than a thousand years ago, things had been different. Whether it was in terms of spirit enhancement or medicine concocting, the disciples of the south bank had been the pillars of the sect, and no one had ever dared to tangle with them. As for the sword cultivators of Green Crest Peak, they gave their mountain peak the reputation of being the strongest in the entire Spirit Stream Sect.

But now, for various reasons, everything had changed, and the north bank was the most dominant. They continuously secured victory in the Chosen battles, and as such, earned vast cultivation resources, which ensured that their battle prowess only continued to grow. Furthermore, their practice of cultivation differed somewhat from the south bank, so different that many of the outside cultivator clans had come to view the north bank as the dominant force within the Spirit Stream Sect, and its effective leader.

In the Spirit Stream Sect, the south bank used magic to control inanimate objects, while the north bank controlled living beasts!

For example, upon joining the sect, Bai Xiaochun had learned the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art. In contrast, the introductory art for north bank disciples was the Heavenspan Elephant Control Art!

During the Chosen battles held over the past thousand years, the south bank had suffered defeat over and over again. That was especially true of the battles fought thirty years before, in which only one disciple from the south bank had ended up in the top ten. That, of course, infuriated the elders and peak lords of the three mountain peaks of the south bank. Afterward, they personally went out to look for new talented disciples, which was how Shangguan Tianyou and the other top Chosen came to join the sect.

Shangguan Tianyou, Lu Tianlei, and Zhou Xinqi were the trump cards of the south bank. They were the apprentices of the peak lords, and had been meticulously trained until their cultivation bases reached the pinnacle of the eighth level of Qi Condensation. In terms of battle prowess, they were already in a position to be able to defeat many disciples of the Inner Sect.

Shangguan Tianyou was the most impressive of them all, adept with void magic, and generally accepted as the number one Chosen of the south bank.

Lu Tianlei was skilled with the Dao of lightning, and was extraordinary in his own right. His lightning magic was shocking, and even his Master Xu Meixiang praised him ceaselessly, virtually guaranteeing him a spot in the top ten.

Then there was Zhou Xinqi, who showed incredible skill in the

Dao of medicine. Of course, as Li Qinghou's personal apprentice, she also had astonishing magical techniques at her disposal.

When Bai Xiaochun learned about the overall situation from Xu Baocai, he couldn't help but feel indignant at the despotic way the north bank acted.

Filled with emotion, he swore to himself: "Just wait until I reach Foundation Establishment. I'll definitely cut those north bank Outer Sect disciples down a notch or two!"

As far as the south bank qualifying matches, and the subsequent Chosen battles, he wasn't the least bit interested in them.

As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, fighting and killing weren't his style. He was a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. He existed on a higher plane of seniority, and didn't feel that it was appropriate for him to be competing with members of the junior generation.

"Besides, what would happen if I didn't win?" he thought with a dry cough. "Wouldn't that lose a lot of face for elder Brother Sect Leader? Forget about it. I'm definitely not participating." When he thought about how much he was sacrificing just for his Elder Brother Sect Leader, he decided that he should probably go burn some incense to his Master and complain a bit about the situation.

\*\*

Life was great. Bai Xiaochun didn't think much about the Chosen battles. Instead, he visited Big Fatty Zhang as often as he could. Every time Big Fatty Zhang would try a spirit enhancement, Bai Xiaochun would use his turtle-wok to turn it into a success, which led Big Fatty Zhang into new realms of excitement.

At a certain point, Big Fatty Zhang began to suspect that something was going on, but was so happy that he simply reveled in the feeling of success. Eventually, he got used to the situation, and came to be convinced that he really was a genius spirit enhancer.

Considering the incredible level of self-confidence that he was building, his spirit enhancement magic and power of will also began to grow much stronger.

Time passed. A month later, it was only three days until the qualifying round began. It was at that point that Bai Xiaochun got a notice from the sect informing him that attendance in the qualifying round was mandatory for all disciples in the eighth level of Qi Condensation. There were to be no exceptions.

After scanning the jade slip, Bai Xiaochun yawned. Assuming there must be some mistake with the message, he continued his pill concocting.

Three days later at dawn, bells filled the south bank, and Bai Xiaochun strolled out into the sect to see countless Outer Sect disciples hurrying along with very serious expressions. Spirits rising, he joined the crowd of moving people.

Soon, he reached a certain valley behind the three mountain peaks. It was a huge place, paved with white jade, in the middle of which was a huge, open square, with four awe-inspiring columns in the corners carved with coiling dragons.

Between each column was another statue depicting a fierce beast, extremely lifelike in appearance. The ferocious nature of it all made the entire valley seethe with a bleak and violent aura.

On one of the valley walls was a balcony, upon which numerous notable members of the sect could be seen. Li Qinghou was there, along with Xu Meixiang and the peak lord from the third mountain. Even Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong was present.

The qualifying matches for the north and south banks were not held concurrently. The south bank went first, followed by the north bank. That was to ensure that the sect leader didn't show partiality to one bank or the other. After observing the south bank's qualifying matches, he would go to the north bank to watch theirs.

Li Qinghou and the other peak lords sat near Zheng Yuandong, chatting amiably.

Behind them were the elders from the three mountain peaks, including Elder Zhou. Some sat quietly with their eyes closed, others conversed in low tones. A few were observing the disciples pouring into the valley.

Bai Xiaochun walked along lazily until he was in the valley itself. Looking around, he realized that he had never been here before. Curious about the statues, he walked over to examine one more closely.

As he neared the statue, he noticed that there was even fur on its surface, which rippled in the wind. “These creatures almost look alive. So interesting.”

It was at this point that the sound of voices suddenly rose up from within the audience.

“Elder Sister Zhou is on the way!”

“Elder Sister Zhou has been in the eighth level of Qi Condensation for a while now. She’s definitely going to get into the top ten. In fact, considering her status, she’ll most likely get into the top three!”

A blue swath of flying silk appeared off in the distance, upon which could be seen Zhou Xinqi. She first clasped hands and bowed to the balcony, then landed off to the side, where she closed her eyes and sat down quietly. The truth was that she was inwardly nervous; after all her years of cultivation, the qualifying round had finally arrived, and she had to perform well.

Up on the balcony, Li Qinghou gave her a faint smile of approval.

Smiling, Zheng Yuandong said, “Qinghou, not only is Zhou Xinqi

extraordinary with plants and vegetation, she also has some shocking magical techniques. I have the feeling she'll bring glory to the south bank."

"There's no need for such praise, sect leader," Li Qinghou replied modestly. "My apprentice still needs some more tempering. However, her personality is of a type rarely seen among her contemporaries. She really has incredible potential."

Most of the crowd looked over enviously at Zhou Xinqi, but as for Bai Xiaochun, he cleared his throat and looked at her with an expression similar to Li Qinghou's. Clasp ing his hands behind his back, he gazed at her with praise and approval.

Before people could finish talking about Zhou Xinqi, another small uproar occurred in the crowd. People turned their heads up as the rumble of thunder echoed out. A bolt of lightning snaked out overhead, perched atop which was a young man wearing a long green robe and a haughty expression.

Countless lightning bolts spread out in his wake, and thunder boomed around him. He seemed even more impressive than Zhou Xinqi, and when he landed in the square, the area for thirty meters around him turned into a lake of dancing lightning.

Sparks of electricity even arced back and forth on his skin.

"It's Lu Tianlei from Violet Cauldron Peak! Elder Brother Lu has a rare lightning meridian. He's been in secluded meditation almost the entire time since joining the sect. Now he finally makes his



extraordinary debut!”

“Lu Tianlei is incredible. He cultivates some sort of technique that gives him control of lightning!” As the conversations continued, Lu Tianlei proudly clasped hands in greeting toward the balcony. Then his gaze swept across the crowd. Among all the Outer Sect disciples gathered there, only Zhou Xinqi was someone he considered a worthy opponent. The others weren’t even worth looking at.

Up on the balcony, Xu Meixiang smiled, her eyes gleaming with satisfaction. “Sect leader, what do you think of the Extreme Dao Lightning Control Magic that my disciple cultivates?”

Zheng Yuandong smiled and looked a bit more closely at Lu Tianlei. “He already controls two types of lightning, and he’s only in the eighth level of Qi Condensation. With skill like that, he’s definitely a top Chosen among the disciples under Foundation Establishment.”

The peak lord of Green Crest Peak, the emaciated old man who seemed as sharp as a sword, suddenly looked up with a smile.

Zheng Yuandong’s face flickered, and he also turned to look in the same direction. The other elders did the same.

A beam of sword light... split through the clouds, rumbling along with incredible momentum. The clouds seethed as an ancient green sword appeared, a beam that cut through everything in its path, piercing through the air as it shot toward the ground.

The sword seemed primeval, forged from bronze, weathered with age and completely extraordinary.

An extremely handsome young man stood atop the sword, wearing the robes of an Outer Sect disciple. His black hair whipped about in the wind, and he held his hands clasped behind his back. A faint layer of golden light flickered around him, and behind him could be seen the images of numerous green lotuses.

In addition to the lotuses was a nine-meter-long fish with the head of a dragon, which swirled about, sending rainwater falling down everywhere around it.

Even before the young man arrived, the rain water was splashing down onto the square. Countless disciples looked up in awe, gasping at the incredible sight.

“It’s Eldest Brother Shangguan!”

“The number one Chosen in the Outer Sect on the south bank. Shangguan Tianyou!”

“According to the rumors, he has a powerful sword spirit body, and is the reincarnation of some almighty sword cultivator. For some reason, the heavens are guilty, and showered him with countless blessings. When he was three, he was walking down the road and happened to find an ancient sword; when he was seven, a baby Crimson Cloudbeast fell out of the sky and instantly accepted him as its master; when he was thirteen, he acquired a golden light

shield. That is why his name is [Tianyou](#)!”

“Tianyou” literally means “the heavens assist”

Zhou Xinqi looked over with a grave expression.

As for Lu Tianlei, he looked up, lightning dancing in his eyes, sparks surging around him. From the look in his eyes, he was itching to fight.

As the green beam of light closed in, Shangguan Tianyou clasped hands toward the balcony and called out, “I, Shangguan Tianyou, offer greetings to the sect leader, my Master, the two peak lords, and all of the various elders.”

As he floated down toward the square, he looked around at all the disciples and nodded.

His amiable gaze and friendly nod caused countless disciples to clasp hands in greeting. Many of the female disciples batted their eyes bashfully.

Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong gave a hearty laugh and looked over at the peak lord of Green Crest Peak. “Wonderful. Simply wonderful!” he said. “At only the eighth level of Qi Condensation, he can already transform sword qi into lotuses. Regardless of whether this Shangguan Tianyou really is the reincarnation of an almighty cultivator, he definitely has a sword spirit body. To accomplish what he has before Foundation Establishment is truly a rarity!

“I have to say that I’m shocked by the south bank’s performance so far!”

Li Qinghou and the other peak lords smiled, and the other elders chuckled. All of them clearly wished to have their revenge on the north bank.

Zheng Yuandong was about to continue speaking when suddenly he looked down at the square and saw Bai Xiaochun standing there next to the statue, hands clasped behind his back, looking like a member of the senior generation.

Chuckling dryly, he said, “This Bai Xiaochun... really loves to indulge in his histrionics.”

## Chapter 83: Elder Zhou, You're Up

---

Zheng Yuandong wasn't the only one who noticed Bai Xiaochun. Everyone else was in a huge commotion, but Bai Xiaochun was simply standing there like a member of the senior generation. He couldn't have stuck out more from everyone else.

One of the elders on the balcony smiled and said, "Young Bai Xiaochun is already in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and fought his way out of certain death at the hands of the Luo Chen Clan. He'll definitely make it into the top ten. In fact, he probably has a shot at the top five."

"That's right," said another elder. "Not only does he have extraordinary skill with plants and vegetation, he also cultivates a shocking type of body refinement. I'd say he's a definite dark horse in the qualifying round today."

Hearing these comments caused the faces of Li Qinghou and Zheng Yuandong to beam. Exchanging a glance, they laughed heartily.

"He's different from the rest of them," Li Qinghou said. "He has much stronger convictions than his contemporaries. When I brought him here to the sect all those years ago, I asked him why he wanted to practice cultivation, and he said it's because he wants to live forever." He looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a warm gaze. He'd finally finished preparing a defensive magical item that he planned to give Bai Xiaochun after the qualifying matches were over.

“Alright, enough with the praise,” Zheng Yuandong said. “Although he’s my Junior Brother, as Qinghou is well aware, he’s stubborn and mischievous. He still needs much tempering. However, he’s a pure and genuine person who doesn’t seek the limelight, which is laudable.” Despite the words he uttered, everyone could tell that Zheng Yuandong’s eyes gleamed with anticipation.

As the group on the balcony continued to exchange words, Bai Xiaochun stood there next to the statue, proud and aloof as he looked over at Lu Tianlei, and the crowd favorite that was Shangguan Tianyou. Inwardly, Bai Xiaochun was a bit apprehensive.

Lu Tianlei had electricity writhing around him, which left Bai Xiaochun’s scalp numb as he thought back to what it had been like to ride his sword through the thunderstorm. And then there was Shangguan Tianyou, with his incredible good fortune and a sword from ancient times. He also had a shocking energy which left Bai Xiaochun breathless.

As far as he could tell, both of them were incredibly strong.

But then he thought about his own status, and coughed dryly before once again plastering an approving smile onto his face.

“There are plenty of Chosen to go around,” he thought, “which simply goes to show how powerful the Spirit Stream Sect is. But I’m a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. I shouldn’t be comparing myself to my juniors. They are the future of the sect, and bullying them would be wrong. Yeah. Any

comparisons should wait until after they're part of the Inner Sect!" Having made his decision, he continued to stand there looking around approvingly.

More and more people crowded into the valley. All of the disciples who were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation were cracking their knuckles in preparation for the fighting. As for those whose cultivation bases were lower, they were naturally coming to act as the audience.

Among the three mountain peaks of the south bank, there were roughly a thousand disciples in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and all of them were present in the valley. Bai Xiaochun was familiar with some of them. However, not all were the type of people who liked crowds and excitement. Many preferred to practice their cultivation in secret, waiting for just such an occasion as this to finally show off.

The countless other Outer Sect disciples who didn't qualify to participate were waiting eagerly to see how the qualifying round would turn out. Everyone was itching to find out who would make it into the top hundred, and of course, the top ten.

As for who would be the top three, there didn't seem to be much suspense about that. Presumably, those spots would go to Shanguan Tianyou, Lu Tianlei, and Zhou Xinqi.

Gradually, the thousand or so eighth level disciples quieted down, as did the other surrounding disciples. A sense of pressure began to fill the air, and gradually, a foreboding sense of impending violence.

A stifling, suffocating feeling weighed down on everyone, and people started to get nervous.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked to find that he was also getting nervous, although he wasn't sure why. Reminding himself that he wouldn't be participating, he looked around and forced himself to relax.

It was at this time that Li Qinghou's voice rang out from the balcony above. "The grand competition between the south and north banks is about to begin!

"Some among you have practiced your cultivation in secret, leaving your true level of power unknown to the public. Now is your chance to shine. You should not harbor any fear that your rapid progress or unique good fortune will be the subject of avarice among members of the senior generation. Cultivation is a personal matter, and everyone has a right to their secrets. The Spirit Stream Sect has a ten thousand year history. It is no accident that we grew from a small sect all the way to our current level of glory. All of that is because of the good fortune of our disciples. Whatever good fortune you have acquired is your personal destiny!

"Some of you have come to be called Chosen by others. However, that is only because of your natural talents. Talented people can be found everywhere among the defeated. Today is the day to prove yourselves. Today is the day to show whether or not you truly deserve the title which has been bestowed upon you by others. Today you can prove whether or not you truly deserve to be... Chosen!" Li Qinghou's voice was deep and filled with pride, and



seemed to form a resonance with the somber pressure that filled the area. Those who listened began to pant nervously.

The disciples who had various secrets to keep all looked on with shining eyes.

As for Lu Tianlei and the other famous disciples, from the expressions on their faces, they clearly were itching to fight.

“The top one hundred competitors in the qualifying round will be promoted to the Inner Sect. The top ten will go on to represent the south bank in the grand finale competition, which is only held once every thirty years. This time, we have a chance to make sure that our compatriots on the north bank remember who we are!” With that, Li Qinghou flicked his sleeve, causing rumbling sounds to fill the air as columns of light shot up from all three of the south banks’ mountain peaks.

Everything shook violently; it was as if a pair of invisible hands were ripping apart the air above the valley, causing a huge bridge to appear!

It was an ancient, primitive bridge, like something which had been pulled out of primeval times. It was constructed of stone, and was covered with ancient magical symbols that shone with flickering light.

The bridge was fully 300 meters wide, and so long that it couldn’t be taken in with a single glance. It was so grand and majestic that compared to it, the valley they were in seemed like nothing more

than a stepping stone.

The next person to speak was not Li Qinghou, but rather, Xu Meixiang. “This is the Spirit Stream Bridge, a precious treasure of our sect. It has been summoned to act as your path in this trial by fire. After the ninth bell toll, all disciples in the eighth level of Qi Condensation will step onto the bridge!” Xu Meixiang stood there, beautiful and somber, her gown fluttering in the wind, her hair floating around her. She looked less like a woman and more like an immortal.

“Whoever reaches the end of the bridge first will take first place. The same method will be used to determine who is in the top hundred, and the top ten!” As Xu Meixiang’s voice continued to echo out in the valley, the disciples looked eagerly at the bridge up above.

This format of competition was a comprehensive way to test the disciples. The rules didn’t prohibit fighting; as long as no lethal attacks were made, anything was permitted. Whoever reached the end first would be the winner!

Of course, there would be obstacles along the way, and even luck would play a part.

The audience panted as they waited, eyes glittering, cultivation bases stirring. Bai Xiaochun stood there yawning as the bells began to toll.

Once, twice, thrice.... Four tolls, five tolls, six....

The sound of the bells struck the minds of the disciples, causing their hearts to pound. They began to rotate their cultivation bases faster and faster as they gathered together the energy they had built up.

Soon the bells had rung seven times, and then eight.... Finally, when the ninth tolling of the bell could be heard, rumbling sounds filled the air as the cultivation bases of all of the eighth level disciples exploded out with full force. Like arrows loosed from a bow, all of the disciples shot into action!

Over a thousand people flew into motion toward the ancient bridge. In the blink of an eye, everyone was on its surface, speeding along. Shangguan Tianyou was the fastest, standing on his flying sword, a green beam of light that instantly took the lead!

Right behind him was Lu Tianlei, surrounded by crackling lightning. His energy only seemed to grow, and his speed was incredible as he attempted to close the gap between himself and Shangguan Tianyou, eyes bloodshot, howling.

In third place was Zhou Xinqi, her blue flying silk rippling as she advanced at top speed.

There were a few people directly behind them, none of them very well-known. Just as Li Qinghou had said, there were disciples who had concealed their true cultivation bases, waiting just for this opportunity to explode out with full force. That group almost immediately pulled out ahead of the pack, and from the look of it,

they still had energy to go faster.

The surrounding audience of disciples looked on with wide eyes, hearts pounding at the scene which was unfolding in front of them.

However, as wind blasted out from the sudden acceleration of the eighth level disciples, Bai Xiaochun was left standing alone in the square.

After the ninth bell toll, the wind buffeted his face, and he blinked. He stood there alone, looking up at the thousand disciples racing along, sighing in admiration.

“Keep it up guys!” he shouted. A moment later, he leaped into motion, landing on the bridge and running along. In the end, he decided that he might as well participate in the qualifying match, but that he wouldn’t even try to get into the top ten or hundred.

“I heard the north bank is full of fiends. I’d be an idiot to try to fight with them.” He moved along lazily, clearly having no desire or intention of being promoted to the Inner Sect. In his view, he was already a Prestige disciple and the Junior Brother of the sect leader, and therefore had no need to become an Inner Sect disciple.

Therefore, he simply enjoyed the scenery, cheering the other disciples on. He made quite a contrast with the other competitors.

The audience members looked on with wide eyes and strange

expressions.

Meanwhile, on the balcony, veins bulged out on Li Qinghou's face as he glared at Bai Xiaochun, feeling like his head was about to explode.

Xu Meixiang and the peak lord from Green Crest Peak exchanged an incredulous glance and then smiled wryly. The other elders' eyes went wide. Never could they possibly have imagined that something like this would take place in the qualifying matches.

Were it any other disciple, they would quickly go teach him a lesson. But Bai Xiaochun had a special status, so all the elders could do was look over at Li Qinghou and Zheng Yuandong.

Zheng Yuandong felt a headache coming on from the embarrassing loss of face.... Clearing his throat, he glanced over at Elder Zhou.

“Elder Zhou, whatever happens next, I'll pretend I didn't see. You know, that phoenix of yours really suffered a lot.”

Elder Zhou instantly understood. Face darkening, he flew up into the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Xiaochun,” he roared, “nobody can save you today! Once I get my hands on you, I'll make sure you understand exactly how my phoenix suffered!!” With that, he shot toward the bridge like a bird of prey.

## Chapter 84: Unbelievable Acceleration

---

Bai Xiaochun was so startled by the sudden enraged roar that he leapt up into the air. When he turned to look over his shoulder and saw Elder Zhou charging aggressively toward him, his eyes went wide, and he almost fainted from fright.

Elder Zhou looked like a fiendish, murderous monster, and although he wasn't shouting that he intended to take Bai Xiaochun's life, only that he was going to make him experience the same suffering the phoenix had, Bai Xiaochun thought about what the phoenix had looked like after a full day of pouncing on the other birds of Fragrant Cloud Peak. The mere idea left his hair standing on end.

He couldn't help but imagine what it would be like to be in the place of that phoenix, and his eyes went wide. Shaking, he looked forward again and began to pick up speed.

He didn't lack courage; he simply feared death. However... what was happening now had occurred too suddenly. Furthermore, there were things in this world to be feared more than death, such as, being transformed into a phoenix....

When he thought about that, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but scream: "Elder Brother, save me! I don't want to get transformed into a bird!"

Up on the balcony, Zheng Yuandong cleared his throat and pretended not to hear.

Because of the sudden and intense provocation, Bai Xiaochun let out one blood-curdling scream after another. At the same time, he increased his speed explosively. In the blink of an eye, he transformed into a series of afterimages as he shot toward the disciples who were running along in last place. Those disciples felt something like a wind bearing down on them from behind, then stared in shock as Bai Xiaochun shot past them at high speed.

“How... how fast is he going?!?!” Everyone was shocked enough as it was, but then Elder Zhou came racing by in hot pursuit of Bai Xiaochun. That caused countless disciples to all gasp.

The Outer Sect disciples in the audience all stared at what was happening, eyes wide with shock.

“I can’t believe Bai Xiaochun is going so fast!”

“It seems that being chased makes him go a lot faster than usual....”

The audience was in an uproar, and Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, although no tears came. He felt completely maligned as he fled for his life, passing one disciple after another, all of whom gasped in shock. There was one of them who wasn’t willing to be overtaken. Gritting his teeth, he pushed forward with all the speed he could muster, and yet in the end, he could only watch as Bai Xiaochun sped past him into the distance ahead.

“Dammit, he’s running faster than a mouse whose tail got

stepped on!”

By now, disciples both on and off the bridge were completely shaken by the terrifying display of speed put on by Bai Xiaochun. Even the sect leader and the others on the balcony could only look on with jaws wide open, totally shocked by the speed they were witnessing.

Smiling wryly, Li Qinghou looked over at Zheng Yuandong and said, “Well... you really know how to handle things, sect leader!”

Xu Meixiang and the old man from Green Crest Peak had strange expressions on their faces, and the other surrounding elders couldn’t hold back from chuckling.

Zheng Yuandong cleared his throat. “For a stubborn, mischievous kid like him... there really isn’t any other option.”

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun was picking up more speed, throwing the audience into even further commotion.

“He’s already passed up half of the other disciples! At this rate, he’ll definitely make it into the top hundred!”

Some of the audience instantly devolved into cheering.

“Go, Sect Uncle Bai, go...!”



However, it was at this point that the stones on the bridge suddenly trembled, and began to transform into numerous puppets. Eyes glittering, the puppets roared and lunged toward the charging disciples.

In the lead position was Shangguan Tianyou, whose expression was the same as ever as he waved a sword through the air, causing several puppets to explode. He didn't even slow down by a bit, maintaining his first place position.

Close behind were Lu Tianlei and Zhou Xinqi, as well as the handful of other disciples who had kept their cultivation and identities secret. The entire group easily dispatched the puppets and continued onward at full speed.

Puppets appeared around Bai Xiaochun as well. He watched anxiously as they closed in on him, and was just about to attack when suddenly, a screaming wind could be heard behind him as Elder Zhou approached.

“I’ve changed my mind, Bai Xiaochun! After I catch you, I won’t make you experience what my phoenix did. I’ll make you feel the pain that the other birds felt!” With that, he cackled cruelly. By this point, he was pulling out all the stops in his attempt to incite Bai Xiaochun....

When Bai Xiaochun heard Elder Zhou’s words, all of the blood in his body rushed to his brain, and his vision began to fade. He thought about the miserable fates of the birds, the anguished calls of the spirit tail chickens, and the powerful body of the phoenix. Then... he let out the most piercing, agonized scream of his entire

life.

“Help me! I don’t want to be pounced on....”

He was now even more scared than he had been when being chased down by the Luo Chen Clan. Never before in his life had he been incited in such a matter. As he screamed and trembled, silver light began to shine from his skin, covering him to the point where he almost seemed to be made from silver.

At that point, he broke through to another level of speed. Even as Elder Zhou bore down on him, he bolted off like a startled wild boar.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

He was now moving so fast that any puppets who got near him were instantly bashed away and sent flying through the air. He was like a streak of light that shot forward at blinding speed.

From a distance, it wasn’t even possible to see Bai Xiaochun, only the countless puppets being tossed up into the air after being hit.

He was now moving far, far faster than he had been before, and quickly passed up the top four hundred to reach the top three hundred. Then two hundred. Until finally... he was in the top hundred!

He was moving too fast!

Rumbling sounds echoed out as he passed countless disciples, who were left staring in shock at the maddened Bai Xiaochun. He screamed as he flew along, eyes wide and bloodshot, swearing to himself that he must never, ever allow himself to be caught by Elder Zhou.

He'd already forgotten about the trial by fire, or about the rankings. All he was thinking was that he needed to run, run, run... off of the bridge!

The other disciples in his path became obstacles that he would grab and send flying off to the side.

The audience simply watched in amazement.

“Is he... even human!?!?”

“No way! He's like a mix between a wild boar and a dragon!!”

Elder Zhou stared in amazement as Bai Xiaochun proceeded along without avoiding anything in his path, and instead just slammed everything out of his way. Elder Zhou could help but wonder... if he had pushed Bai Xiaochun a bit too far.

Nothing seemed capable of holding him back. His speed defied description, and yet, he continued to accelerate. Then, rumbling sounds echoed out as a new obstacle appeared. Instead of puppets, numerous webs popped up, stretching out in front of the disciples

to impede their progress.

However, the instant a web appeared in front of Bai Xiaochun, he blasted right through it, leaving behind nothing more than a hole. Popping sounds rang out as the nets didn't hinder him for even a moment.

It was as if his incredible speed had transformed him into a razor-sharp blade!

Next, the ground began to ripple as it transformed into a quagmire, complete with occasional whirlpools. The sudden change slowed many people down, but not Bai Xiaochun.... He didn't even notice what had happened. A whooshing sound could be heard as he shot forward. Not even the spinning whirlpools could slow him down.

Soon, he was in the top eighty. Then the top fifty, thirty, and finally, the top ten....

Upon seeing this, Elder Zhou gasped. Considering his reaction, there was almost no need to mention the disciples in the audience. All eyes were fixed on Bai Xiaochun; not a single person was even looking at Shangguan Tianyou and the other front runners.

A bald young man with cold, sinister eyes appeared up in front of Bai Xiaochun. He had been concealing his true battle prowess for years, and rarely had any contact with anyone. His entire purpose on this day was to make sure the so-called top three Chosen knew that there were always more powerful people out there in the

world.

His entire person radiated flickering light, and three pearls swirled around him, allowing him to slash through all obstacles like a sharp knife through bamboo. As he sped forward, a dozen or so vortexes sprang up around him. However, he knew that as long as he kept his momentum going through the current area, they would soon disappear.

“The stronger you are, the more vortexes appear. I wonder how many vortexes appeared for the people who passed through this area head of me. It must have been a shocking scene.” Even as the bald-headed disciple murmured to himself, he heard something whooshing through the air behind him. Surprised, he assumed that he must be hearing things. After all, there was nothing that could possibly speed through the air like that, not here....

However, before he could even turn his head, a blast of wind overtook him, and a figure blurred past him at top speed. Surrounding that person were over a hundred vortexes!

The bald disciple's eyes went wide as the figure sped past him without slowing down at all. The disciple rubbed his eyes, thinking he must have been seeing things. By that point, he could just barely make out the person speeding away in the distance.

“Impossible!!” he mouthed.

Trembling, Bai Xiaochun screamed, shooting forward with over a hundred vortexes surrounding him. However, after passing

through the current region, they vanished. Picking up speed, he passed more disciples. All of these people were in the top ten, and for years had been concealing their good fortune and strength, hoping to reveal it in shocking fashion now. But then Bai Xiaochun showed up, and all they could do was stare in astonishment at his freakish performance.

Zhou Xinqi gritted her teeth as she entered a new area. Intense pressure weighed down as if to lock her in place, forcing her to slow down.

However, even as she struggled forward, she heard cracking sounds from behind her. Jaw dropping, she looked around, whereupon her pupils constricted in disbelief.

A boom rang out as Bai Xiaochun shot past her. He was moving so fast that the pressure which attempted to slow him down did nothing. Cracking sounds could be heard, and fissures opened up in the air... which then shattered!

“Bai Xiaochun? Impossible!” She could only watch as Bai Xiaochun shattered the solidifying pressure and then shot onward like a bolt of lightning.

## Chapter 85: He... Took First?

---

Even as Zhou Xinqi reeled in shock, another blast of wind swept over her, and Elder Zhou appeared. As he passed, he looked over and smiled, and she nodded in return.

Despite the faint smile on his face, when he spoke, the voice of a fiendish monster echoed out from his mouth.

“I’ve changed my mind again, Bai Xiaochun. After I catch you, I’m going to starve you for a month, then put you in with a flock of phoenixes and a horde of wild beasts!”

Zhou Xinqi’s eyes went wide, and at the same time, a miserable scream could be heard coming from Bai Xiaochun.

“Help me, Uncle Li! Save me, dear Elder Brother Sect Leader! I don’t want to starve! I don’t want to get locked up with phoenixes and wild beasts....” Bai Xiaochun was trembling in fear as he conjured mental images of the scenes described by Elder Zhou. Screaming, he shot forward with incredible speed, transforming into nothing more than a shadow.

Up ahead, Lu Tianlei sped along in lightning form. Although the early stages of the path had been easy for him, things had slowly grown more and more difficult. The area he currently faced was filled with razor-sharp wind blades, and if he proceeded too quickly, it would cause them to fly toward him.

He had summoned a puppet moments before, and sent it ahead as

a test, but because it moved too quickly, it was instantly slashed to pieces by the wind blades. Because of that, Lu Tianlei knew that he had no other option than to slow down. Only after finding the proper equilibrium would he be able to continue moving forward.

Shangguan Tianyou was so far ahead he wasn't even visible. Given his consummate level of talent, he had been able to transform into emptiness and then pass through the area effortlessly. The wind blades didn't so much as touch him. Lu Tianlei, who had previously believed himself to be on an equal level with Shangguan Tianyou, was left with hatred seething in his heart.

"So what if you possess void magic?" Lu Tianlei thought. "What's so amazing about that? Just wait till I get past this area... I'll definitely catch up and take first place!" By this point, Lu Tianlei didn't even think of Zhou Xinqi as being worthy of note. The only thing he cared about was overtaking Shangguan Tianyou and winning first place.

Taking a deep breath, he stepped out into the wind blade zone and prepared to pick up speed. But then, a blast of wind could be heard behind him.

The deafening sound caused all of the flying wind blades to tremble. When Lu Tianlei saw that, he smiled in delight.

"Hah! It's definitely Zhou Xinqi. What a moron. If she enters this area going that fast, all the wind blades will head in her direction. I should take advantage of that moment to charge forward!" Looking back, he saw someone skinny racing toward him as fast as



lightning. As soon as the person entered the area with the wind blades, he was already a third of the way through, placing him only about 3,000 meters away from Lu Tianlei.

Because of his incredible speed, it only took the blink of an eye for countless wind blades to swirl together into an enormous cyclone.

At first, he gasped, shocked by Bai Xiaochun's speed. But then, he began to chuckle inwardly. "It's not Zhou Xinqi? Well, it doesn't matter. He's moving way too fast. Is he looking to get killed?! When practicing cultivation, one should rely on one's wits!"

Laughing, Lu Tianlei watched as the wind blades grouped together. At the same time, he gathered the lightning which surrounded him, preparing to make a break for the exit.

Before he could pick up any speed, the screaming Bai Xiaochun continued onward without slowing down at all. Rumbling sounds echoed out as he actually picked up speed.

There were so many wind blades it was impossible to tell how many there were. And yet, when they slammed into Bai Xiaochun, silver light flashed, and to Lu Tianlei's shock, they all shattered.

Countless wind blades fell to pieces, and by the time they reformed, Bai Xiaochun had flown past Lu Tianlei.

Of course, the wind blades wouldn't let him by so easily, and

began to race to catch up.

Lu Tianlei's jaw dropped and his eyes went wide. Then, his scalp went numb and his mind began to spin.

“Impossible!!” he said in a hoarse voice. Before the countless wind blades could catch up to Bai Xiaochun... he was gone.

The wind blades shuddered to a stop angrily, then slowly turned toward Lu Tianlei....

Heart pounding, Lu Tianlei immediately slowed down. However, having been completely frustrated by Bai Xiaochun, the wind blades didn't hesitate for a moment to pounce on him.

“No... NO!!”

Moments later, miserable shrieks began to ring out.

As he ran on up ahead, Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised to hear the bloodcurdling screams behind him. However, there was no time for him to look back. Elder Zhou seemed to be right behind him, bellowing in rage, leaving Bai Xiaochun with no choice but to charge onward, jaw clenched, expression pained.

Thankfully, Elder Zhou was able to rescue Lu Tianlei from the countless swirling wind blades. If he had come a moment later, Lu Tianlei, whose clothing was now ripped to shreds, would most likely have been left with no other choice than to forfeit.

Eyes bloodshot, Lu Tianlei finally realized who Bai Xiaochun was. Voice filled with rage, he bellowed, “Bai Xiaochun!!”

Unaware that he had unwittingly caused yet another person to hate him, Bai Xiaochun moved on at top speed, passing through numerous empty areas. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he caught sight of the end of the bridge up ahead.

“I’m finally near the end!” he thought excitedly. What he didn’t notice was that there was someone else near the end, trodding forward one step at a time.

Shangguan Tianyou was panting. Most the path had been very easy for him, with the difficulty rising only at the very end.

“I can’t believe this place suppresses spiritual power and also has such crushing pressure!” A brutal gleam appeared in his eyes as he proceeded forward. The spiritual power in the area was locked down tight, and there was also huge pressure. He felt like there was a mountain resting on his shoulders, and even more shocking was that with every step he took, it felt like an entire additional mountain was added. Although there were only a total of a hundred steps to take, the difficulty was intense, and he was left trembling physically. He was already quickly approaching his limit.

The closer he got to the end, the greater the pressure grew, and the more mountains he felt building up on him. Eventually, he

reached the point where he had only ten more steps to take. However, those ten steps seemed almost insurmountable.

Shangguan Tianyou took a deep breath, and determination flickered in his eyes.

“The first place spot in the qualifying round belongs to me. I’m going to get into the Chosen battles, and I’m going to take first place there, too! After I get into the Inner Sect, then my future will be in the Spirit Stream Sect’s Legacy Echelon!” Gritting his teeth, he was just about to take another step when he sensed something behind him, and turned to see Bai Xiaochun.

“It’s him....” There were few people on the south bank who didn’t know Bai Xiaochun. Although Shangguan Tianyou had never met him personally, he had attended his funeral and seen his portrait. The fact that Bai Xiaochun was directly behind him was somewhat of a surprise; he had assumed it would be Lu Tianlei.

“It seems I thought a bit too much of Lu Tianlei. What a useless fool.” Looking away, Shangguan Tianyou completely ignored Bai Xiaochun. As far as he was concerned, he was on a completely different level than Bai Xiaochun. Lifting his foot and stepping forward, he heard creaking sounds emanating from his bones.

However, even as he took that single step. Bai Xiaochun also took a step forward. When he felt nothing, he took a second step, and then a third and a fourth....

Soon he had taken fifty steps, whereupon he stopped and looked

up into the air.

“What’s going on? Why do I feel heavier?”

It was at this point that Shangguan Tianyou trembled and put his foot down, having completed one single step. Having taken over ninety steps, he felt like he was on the verge of collapse. He was out of breath, but his expression was one of satisfaction. Then he looked back and saw Bai Xiaochun standing there, having taken fifty steps.

His eyes went wide.

“How... how is he moving so fast!?” Looking shocked, he quickly gritted his teeth. “He must be a body refinement cultivator. That will help him move more quickly at the beginning. But toward the end, things will get more difficult for him. He—” Before Shangguan Tianyou could finish his train of thought, a tremor ran through him, and he looked on in shock as Bai Xiaochun suddenly began to run.

“Run... he’s... he’s running?” Shangguan Tianyou watched wide-eyed as Bai Xiaochun trotted up to him.

“Hey, why are you going so slow?” Bai Xiaochun asked. Looking over his shoulder, he saw no sign of Elder Zhou, and finally breathed a sigh of relief.

“You... don’t feel like there are mountains on your back?”

Shangguan Tianyou asked without even thinking about it, his eyelids twitching.

“Mountains?” Bai Xiaochun jumped up and down a few times. “Eee? Hm, yeah a few, but I can hardly feel them.” Shangguan Tianyou gasped in disbelief.

Bai Xiaochun continued to jump up and down a few times, but then suddenly, he saw Elder Zhou off in the distance. With a shriek, he suddenly shot forward through the final nine steps, taking him off of the bridge.... Then his speed increased dramatically, and he was gone from sight.

When that happened, Elder Zhou finally slowed down and then began to chuckle wryly.

“Bai Xiaochun... actually took first place?”

Simultaneously, back on the balcony, Zheng Yuandong, Li Qinghou, and everyone else shot to their feet, strange expressions on their faces. The elders almost couldn't believe their eyes. Although they had been prepared for a surprising outcome when they saw Bai Xiaochun overtake Zhou Xinqi and Lu Tianlei, the ease with which Bai Xiaochun passed the final section was flabbergasting.

“He... took first?” Li Qinghou murmured.

A moment later, a huge uproar could be heard coming from the

disciples who had gathered to watch the qualifying round.

“Bai Xiaochun... passed up Zhou Xinqi, Lu Tianlei and Shangguan Tianyou! He took first!”

“Heavens! Bai Xiaochun actually took first!”

“The only reason he took first was because of Elder Zhou. Anyone would have fled for their life with him chasing them!”

Shangguan Tianyou's face was pale white, and his mind was spinning. His vision began to go dark, as though lightning were crashing in his mind.

He could only watch as Bai Xiaochun simply walked off of the bridge ahead of him. He began to tremble violently.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Shangguan Tianyou's eyes were completely bloodshot. His pride, his self-respect, everything about him had just been trampled by Bai Xiaochun. Worst of all was how Bai Xiaochun had actually asked him why he was going so slow.

All of the blood in his body began to rush toward his head, and the sword qi inside of him boiled on the verge of exploding. Eyes crimson, he threw caution to the wind and lurched forward nine steps, after which he coughed up a mouthful of blood.

“Bai Xiaochun, I, Shangguan Tianyou, did not lose this day. I... refuse to admit defeat. In the Chosen battles, I'll make sure you

realize well and good that among the Outer Sect disciples... nobody can beat me!” Grinding his teeth, he looked off in the direction Bai Xiaochun had disappeared in, eyes bursting with the desire to do battle.



## Chapter 86: That Again....

---

Terrified out of his mind, Bai Xiaochun flew off of the mountain and out of the sect. It wasn't until he reached the market that he actually stopped and looked behind him.

“What do I do now?” Scowling miserably, heart aching from how much he was being wronged, he couldn't stop thinking about the fact that the bird really had stolen the medicinal pill from him. How was he supposed to explain it? Elder Zhou was so unreasonable....

Even as he began to descend into despondency, he suddenly thought of something. “Wait a second, did I just... get first place?

“Aiya. As the Junior Brother of the sect leader, I didn't want to compete with all of my juniors.” Coughing dryly, he couldn't help but feel a bit pleased with himself. But then he remembered that, having taken first place, he now had no choice but to participate in the Chosen battles with the north bank, and his heart sank.

He moped around the market until night fell. Worried that it still wasn't safe to go back, he finally pulled out a transmission jade slip and sent a message to Xu Baocai, asking him to go check if Elder Zhou was lurking about his courtyard.

After getting word back that the coast was clear, he cautiously returned to the sect. From a distance, he could see Xu Baocai waiting outside of his courtyard, so after looking around carefully one more time, he hurried over.

Xu Baocai looked excitedly at him, and was about to say something when Bai Xiaochun dragged him into the courtyard.

After the door closed, Xu Baocai said, “Sect Uncle Bai, don’t worry. Elder Zhou was sent away by the sect earlier....”

His eyes burned with zeal as he stared at Bai Xiaochun. “Back in the Ovens he stayed completely hidden,” he thought. “He even sold spots into the Outer Sect. Afterward, he took place in that minor competition, which caused a bit of a stir. After that came the incident with the Luo Chen Clan. After he came back alive, he became a Prestige disciple, and even the Junior Brother of the sect leader. Now he took first place in the qualifying match. Bai Xiaochun... is definitely going to be super famous in the future!”

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had exceeded everyone to become the number one disciple had long since shaken Xu Baocai. By now, he viewed him as a breathtaking figure of legend. Thinking back to everything he had done, Xu Baocai couldn’t hold back from clasping hands and bowing very deeply.

“Sect Uncle Bai,” he said, “congratulations on taking first place in the qualifying round!”

Bai Xiaochun looked around the courtyard for a moment before heaving a sigh of relief. Peering in the direction of Elder Zhou’s immortal’s cave for a moment, he swore an oath that once he reached Foundation Establishment, he would feast on phoenix stew!

In response to Xu Baocai's words, he cleared his throat. Looking very much like a member of the senior generation, he said, "I'm really not that amazing. I'm more like a cloud in the sky. Originally, I didn't want to compete with all of those junior disciples, but then Elder Zhou came along. What else was I supposed to do?"

Before, Xu Baocai wouldn't have been able to prevent a look of scorn from appearing on his face in response to Bai Xiaochun's words. But now, Bai Xiaochun was a Chosen among Chosen.

"You always kept a low profile, Sect Uncle Bai," he responded quickly. "However, a Chosen can only stay hidden for so long. Even without intending to, you would have made a big scene one way or another!"

Xu Baocai's words filled Bai Xiaochun with elation. However, he maintained an aloof expression, although his eyes sparkled with approval.

Xu Baocai could sense that Bai Xiaochun was encouraging him, so he continued on excitedly: "Sect Uncle Bai, when it comes time for the Chosen battles with the north bank, the south bank will no longer have the reputation of being weak. All thanks to you! You're going to rock the north bank!"

"Supposedly, the five great Chosen of the north bank are the strongest disciples under Foundation Establishment. They're all fiendish monsters! Thankfully, you're going to show them that the

top Chosen of the sect is here on the south bank, on Fragrant Cloud Peak!”

“Five great Chosen?” Bai Xiaochun said. His expression was the same as ever, but his heart was beginning to pound.

“Yeah! The north bank has five great Chosen. There’s Beihan Lie from Sunset Peak. He’s cold and arrogant, and cultivates one of the Spirit Stream Sect’s ten great secret magics, the Sunset Incantation. He also has a Nighthalker Beast, a horrifying and powerful creature that rips people to shreds. Together, they’ve slaughtered their way to becoming the most powerful fighters under the ninth level of Qi Condensation! In fact, he’s known as the number one disciple on Sunset Peak!”

“Rips people to shreds?” Bai Xiaochun said, eyes widening.

“That’s nothing. There’s also Xu Song from Archway Peak, who was born with a Godchanneling body. The peak lord of Archway Peak paid a huge price to get him to join as a disciple. He’s a complete expert in controlling wild beasts. According to the rumors, he can actually control five beasts at the same time. One time when a rogue Qi Condensation cultivator pissed him off, he chased the guy down for three months and then fed him to his battle beasts. The only thing left behind was the guy’s skeleton!”

“Only the skeleton?” Bai Xiaochun said, mind reeling.

“Even more ferocious than him are the third and fourth Chosen, a brother and sister team from Irispetal Peak. The sister’s name is

Gongsun Wan'er. She's spectacularly beautiful and an expert with birds of prey. One time she had a fight with Zhou Xinqi, and nobody could tell who came out on top!

“The brother is Gongsun Yun, who excels in the Dao of bugs. He always wears a black robe, which is filled with all sorts of bugs. People even say that his body is filled with bug eggs. What a freak! He usually covers his enemies with bugs, and then has them bore into their bodies and drink their blood. The pain is so horrible that people usually just want to die. If you don't escape quickly enough, you'll be completely eaten up, with only your bones left behind!”

“Only your bones?!” Bai Xiaochun said, gasping. Visualizing the scene, his scalp began to tingle.

“The last of the five great Chosen of the north bank... is a mysterious and legendary figure who has no known name. Twenty years ago, the peak lord of Ghostfang Peak brought him back to the sect from some unknown location. People just call him Ghostfang, and he's an expert in magics relating to the Dao of ghosts. He also practices one of the legendary ten secret magics of the Spirit Stream Sect, a magic equally as difficult to cultivate as the Waterswamp Kingdom... Ghosts Haunt the Night! Rumor has it that he can already summon a hundred ghosts! People say that he's the number one Chosen on the north bank....” Having heard the complete explanation of what Xu Baocai knew, Bai Xiaochun was left trembling in fear.

Terrifyingly, the Chosen from the north bank were far more ferocious than the Chosen from the south bank. Although the north bank focused on controlling animals, and it made sense that

they would be slightly more violent, the actual disparity with the south bank was enormous.

“We’ve been outdone by the north bank for years now,” Xu Baocai went on to say. “Every time the Chosen battles come around, we always lose. In fact, last time, nine of the top ten were all from the north bank. What a humiliation. We–” At this point, Xu Baocai noticed that Bai Xiaochun had a very odd expression on his face.

“Sect Uncle Bai, are you okay?”

Bai Xiaochun quickly stuck his chin out and sternly said, “As a member of the south bank, hearing things like this makes me very angry!”

“Sect Uncle Bai, you don’t need to get angry. With you fighting, the north bank will finally be able to see how awesome the south bank is!” Xu Baocai clenched his fists in excitement.

Now that Bai Xiaochun had been thrust onto the stage, he found it hard to get off. Standing straight, he lifted his chin, flicked his sleeve, and said, “What does the north bank count for? With the wave of a hand, I can turn them all into ashes!”

Xu Baocai chatted excitedly for a few more minutes before taking his leave.

By that time, it was late into the night. Bai Xiaochun stood there

alone in his courtyard, thinking about the five people Xu Baocai had just told him about. Then, the wind began to blow, and he felt a chill creeping up his back.

“What kind of people are they over on the north bank? They raise beasts and bugs and ghosts... It’s spine-chilling....” Walking back to his log cabin, the things Xu Baocai had told him continued to rattle around in his mind.

The more he thought about the situation, the more fishy it seemed. Finally, he came to a conclusion. “Elder Zhou must have done this on purpose!

“The thing I hate most in life is all the fighting and killing!” After more thought, he decided that nothing in the world would be able to get him to participate in the Chosen battles.

The next morning at dawn, before he could even come up with a plan of how to avoid the Chosen Battles, a command jade slip flew down from the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak in a black beam of light. After it arrived, Li Qinghou’s voice could be heard.

“Bai Xiaochun, you took first place in the qualifying round on the south bank. In half a month, you will join nine others to participate in the joint south and north bank Chosen battles! If you don’t participate, you will be thrown into 10,000 Snakes Valley!”

“That again....” Bai Xiaochun said with a scowl. He suddenly had the feeling that he had been completely conned by Elder Zhou....

As Li Qinghou's voice faded away, the jade slip vanished, whereupon a bracelet became visible, which floated down in front of Bai Xiaochun.

Surprised, he looked at the bracelet, and then poured some spiritual power into it. The bracelet immediately melted into a black liquid, which then circled around Bai Xiaochun's wrist and then covered his entire body.

Moments later, Bai Xiaochun heard Li Qinghou's voice again, explaining how to use the magic of the item. Apparently, this bracelet could defend against the full-power attack of an early Foundation Establishment cultivator!

Bai Xiaochun shivered. He was no newcomer to the sect, so he knew exactly how much an item like this was worth. It was no less valuable than the Divine Crane Shield given to him by the sect leader. Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but look up toward the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Although Li Qinghou hadn't said much about the item other than give a brief introduction, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but feel a warm feeling when he looked at it. Then he thought back to when he had participated in the smaller competition years before, and the look of anticipation he'd seen on Li Qinghou's face.

After a while, he gritted his teeth and made his decision.

“Fine. I’m going to fight in the Chosen battles!”



## Chapter 87: Outer Sect Chosen Battles

---

Days passed. Bai Xiaochun spent his time in secluded meditation, not taking even a single step outdoors. Ten days later, the sound of bells filled the sect, and Bai Xiaochun's jade slip began to vibrate.

The Chosen battles between the south and north banks were about to begin!

Like they did every thirty years, the matches would be held on Mount Daoseed. As the sound of bells rang out to fill the sect, countless Outer Sect disciples flooded toward that very mountain.

Normally, the north and south banks had few dealings with each other. Only Inner Sect disciples qualified to travel back and forth between them. Now that Mount Daoseed had been opened up, Outer Sect disciples from both banks excitedly rushed over to watch the Chosen battles.

"This time our south bank is definitely going to wash away the disgrace of past times!"

"We're going to make sure the north bank knows that we've risen to new heights of glory!"

The south bank Outer Sect disciples were all very excited. At the same time, the Outer Sect disciples from the north bank were also rushing toward Mount Daoseed, boasting amongst themselves the entire way.

“The south bank is so weak! They’ve lost to us for a thousand years, and this time will be no different!”

“The south bank is destined to lose. In the Spirit Stream Sect, the north bank rules and the south bank drools!!”

The buzz of conversation filled the air as countless Outer Sect disciples streamed toward Mount Daoseed. On Green Crest Peak, Shangguan Tianyou stood there with a cold expression on his face, his gaze as sharp as daggers as he suddenly flew out into the air.

Meanwhile, on Violet Cauldron Peak, Lu Tianlei threw his head back and bellowed. Electricity danced around him as he burst into motion, accompanied by the cheers of numerous disciples.

Zhou Xinqi also flew out into the air. The three great Chosen of the south bank all had very serious looks on their faces.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was still in his residence, his eyes bloodshot as he took a deep breath. Looking very serious, he said, “The time has come.... When the warrior goes to battle, he must don his combat uniform!” Rising slowly to his feet, he slapped his bag of holding, producing eight leather jackets. The jackets he’d worn during his fight with the Luo Chen Clan had all been destroyed. These were new jackets, of higher quality and much more durable.

After somberly donning all of the leather clothing, he waved his arm.

“When the warrior goes to battle, he must have his armor!” With that, a large wok flew out of his bag of holding. Big Fatty Zhang’s wok had also been destroyed in the fighting with the Luo Chen Clan. This was a new wok that he’d acquired after his return. Looking very serious, he strapped the black wok to his back.

“When the warrior goes to battle, he must have a magical weapon!” Even as the words left his mouth, he waved his hand, causing a little wooden sword to fly out, which he strapped to his left side. Next came the Golden Crow Sword, which he placed on his other side. After that came three more flying swords, which he strapped to his back. Finally was the Divine Crane Shield, which he attached to his forearm.

However, he still didn’t feel at ease. After putting on the bracelet from Li Qinghou, he stuck his chin out and began to walk forward solemnly. Clanging and clattering, he walked out of his log cabin.

Outside, he could hear the sound of bells ringing. After taking a few steps, he suddenly remembered something, and quickly slapped his bag of holding to produce a long spear, which he held in hand.

The wind blowing his hair up, he left his courtyard.

From a distance, he almost looked like a ball. He had a huge wok on his back, a long spear in his hand, and had flying swords strapped here and there. It was quite a sight.

As he walked along, countless Outer Sect disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak saw him and were shocked.

The ringing of bells grew more intense, causing the hearts of countless Outer Sect disciples to begin to pound. There were even some Inner Sect disciples who made their way to Mount Daoseed to watch the proceedings.

As Bai Xiaochun made his way along, more and more Outer Sect disciples joined him. Xu Baocai was among their number, and he took the lead in the cheering.

“Sect Uncle Bai is beyond amazing! He’s a hero of the ages!”

“He’s definitely gonna win! Definitely!” Quite a large group of Outer Sect disciples crowded around him, fans who took it upon themselves to escort him along his way. One of the most prominent was Hou Xiaomei, whose voice rose up above the others as she cheered.

Bai Xiaochun was quite moved, and nodded magnanimously to the surrounding disciples. Considering how much everyone was cheering him on, he figured he really did need to do something to be worthy of it all....

Chin jutting out, he strutted proudly all the way to Mount Daoseed. The first thing he saw when he got there was the huge battle arena which had been set up, which glittered with the light of an enormous spell formation.

Further off in the distance were the various peaks of Mount Daoseed. From within the buildings that dotted their surfaces, quite a few sect elders were emerging and flying over toward the arena.

On either side of the arena floor were the stands, which were being filled with numerous Outer Sect disciples. From the look of things, there were tens of thousand of them.

On the north side of the arena were the disciples from the north bank, who, generally speaking, seemed a lot more impressive than the south bank disciples. Almost every single one of them had some sort of fierce beast accompanying them.

The beasts were all different, but each one had a brutal gleam in its eyes, and none seemed like the type it would be wise to provoke. At the very front of all the north bank disciples was a smaller group consisting of both young men and women. Their expressions were cold, and all seemed to burst with energy.

Most conspicuous of the group was a beautiful young woman wearing a long violet gown. Standing next to her was a seven-colored phoenix that seemed even more elegant than Elder Zhou's phoenixes. It had lightning-like eyes that seemed to look down upon all creation.

Next to the young woman was a young man in a long blue robe. He was extremely handsome, and shockingly, had the mark of a red sun on his forehead.

Lounging at his feet was an enormous dog, with thick black fur and razor-sharp claws. It even seemed to emanate a golden light.

Its long, sharp teeth looked particularly ferocious, and it was large enough to ride as a mount. If it rose to its feet, it would probably be as tall as two people, and seemed shockingly powerful. Clearly, its fleshly body strength was unimaginable.

The young man with the mark of the red star was none other than one of the north bank's five great Chosen, Beihan Lie. The huge dog laying at his feet was the famous... Nightstalker Beast!

Near the young man and young woman was another disciple who wore a black robe that covered his face. Only his coldly glittering eyes could be seen, and if one looked closely enough, it was possible to see venomous insects squirming around inside of them!

The mere sight of these Chosen caused the disciples of the south bank to tremble in fear.

As for all the north bank disciples... they looked across the battle arena scornfully at the south bank disciples!

“The south bank always loses. The only people worth paying attention to are Shanguan Tianyou, Lu Tianlei, and Zhou Xinqi.”

“I heard someone else has become famous on the south bank recently. He took first place in the qualifying round. Supposedly he's a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader?”

“It doesn’t matter who he is. He’ll be useless against the north bank. We’re the most powerful by far!”

The Outer Sect disciples from the south bank were mostly assembled, and their numbers were clearly fewer than the disciples from the north bank.

“They’re nothing but a bunch of animal trainers and bug lovers. The south bank is going to get revenge this time around for sure!”

“We’re definitely going to make them lose some face!”

Standing in front of all the south bank disciples were nine disciples, with Shangguan Tianyou, Lu Tianlei, and Zhou Xinqi being the most prominent among them. There were six others with somber expressions, who seemed to seethe with violence. This group was made up of the Chosen from the south bank, and they were currently staring fiercely at the people from the north bank.

It was in the middle of this fierce staring contest that Bai Xiaochun showed up.

Shangguan Tianyou instantly looked over at him, as did all of the south bank disciples in the audience. Thoughtful expressions appeared in their eyes, and the conversations immediately died down.

Mixed emotions could be seen in Shangguan Tianyou's icy eyes as looked at Bai Xiaochun, and his heart filled with begrudging defiance.

Lu Tianlei looked equally defiant as he glared hatefully at Bai Xiaochun, electricity dancing around him.

Zhou Xinqi stood there silently, eyes shining with a strange light, as if she were measuring Bai Xiaochun carefully, trying to determine exactly how much power was contained within his slight frame.

People from the north bank also couldn't help but look over at him. However, he was a stranger to them, and the way he was dressed provoked instant scorn.

The north bank Chosen didn't even deign to pay him any attention.

Finding himself to be the center of so much attention made Bai Xiaochun feel a bit embarrassed. Clearing his throat, he stuck his chest out, hefted his spear, and strutted over to stand next to Zhou Xinqi.

When he realized that both sides were staring threateningly at each other, his spirits instantly rose.

"A staring contest! I'm great at those!" He immediately looked over at the north bank disciples, a very serious expression on his



face.

In that moment, a breeze picked up, lifting his long hair off of his back. Coupled with the fact that he held a long spear in his hand, he cut quite an impressive figure.

As time passed, more people began to fill the stands on either side. A huge sea of people was growing, separated only by the arena floor.

Soon, all of the north bank Chosen had arrived. The last one to show up was a young man in a long black robe. He was handsome, but his face was so pale that it seemed to be completely devoid of blood. He came to stand in front of all the other Chosen, where he closed his eyes, an expression of seeming complete disinterest on his face. In the same moment that he closed his eyes, the air around him seemed to twist and distort, as if he were surrounded by countless fierce ghosts, arisen from the shadows of hell.

About this time, beams of light flew toward the battle arena from both the north and south banks. Among them were the seven peak lords from the seven mountain peaks.

Elder Zhou was also there, accompanied by an arrogant phoenix which flew around him. When the phoenix saw Bai Xiaochun, it looked at him with a very supercilious glare.

Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong was also in the group. After everyone had gathered, he looked at the disciples from the north and south banks, then said, “The joint south and north bank Outer

Sect Chosen battles were last won by the north bank. As such, they may send twelve disciples into battle.

“As the previous loser, the south bank may only send ten people into battle.

“There will be a total of twenty-two competitors. Opponents will be chosen by drawing lots. The goal of the competition is to select the top ten disciples, as well as... the number one disciple!

“We are here to help each other learn and grow, so killing is not permitted. After every round, you will be given three incense sticks’ worth of time to recover. If your opponent concedes, you must immediately cease fighting. The competition will be presided over by Ouyang Jie from the Hall of Justice.

“Perform well. Four prime elders will be observing the battle with divine sense.... And now, let the Outer Sect Chosen battles... begin!”

## Chapter 88: The North Bank's Strongest

---

In response to Zheng Yuandong's words, the disciples from the north and south banks felt their hearts starting to pound, and subconsciously looked up at a terrace on the snow-capped top of Mount Daoseed.

At the same time, four streams of shockingly powerful divine sense flowed out and swept over everyone present.

The streams of divine sense covered all of the disciples, including Bai Xiaochun, causing them to feel as if incredible pressure were weighing down on them. These people seemed powerful enough to kill everyone present in body and soul with little more than a glance. Everyone felt that way, including Bai Xiaochun, Shangguan Tianyou, and even the Chosen from the north bank. All of them trembled under the pressure, and yet at the same time, their eye shone with excitement.

The fact that there would be prime elders observing the battle with divine sense caused all of the competitors' eyes to shine brightly.

"If I can attract the attention of a prime elder, maybe I could be accepted as an apprentice...."

"I definitely need to put everything on the line in this battle!" Almost immediately, murderous auras sprang up from the disciples on both sides.

Bai Xiaochun was the only one who simply stood there blinking.

“Prime elders. That’s the same rank as my Master, right? So they’re my Sect Uncles....” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but feel proud of himself. His ranking in the sect really was a bit too high. After a moment of thought, he resolved to go visit his Sect Uncles after the Chosen battles were over.

It was at this point that Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong swished his sleeve, causing a sphere of light to fly out into the middle of the battle arena. It quickly split up into twenty-two pearls, which then flew out to Bai Xiaochun and all of the other competitors.

Bai Xiaochun looked down at the pearl in his hand. “Eleven?”

He peered out of the corner of his eye to see if he could spot what number Shangguan Tianyou and the others had gotten, only to find that they were keeping them hidden.

At this point, a cold voice suddenly rang out from the balcony above. It was not Zheng Yuandong, but rather, Ouyang Jie from the Hall of Justice. “The first battle will take place between the disciples holding pearls number one and two. Please step forward!”

In immediate response, a gaunt young man flew out from among the north bank disciples. His expression was cold and arrogant, and his appearance provoked a cheer from the north bank disciples. Although he wasn’t one of the five great Chosen, he was still quite famous.

As soon as he stepped onto the battle arena, he called out, “Liu Yun of the north bank!”

In response, Shangguan Tianyou suddenly flew out. “Shangguan Tianyou of the south bank!”

He stood there, expression icy, looking like an unsheathed sword. Even the words he spoke seemed to make everything colder.

Of course, as soon as Shangguan Tianyou stepped forth, the Outer Sect disciples from the south bank exploded into loud cheering.

The gaunt young man’s face flickered; he had never imagined that the first person he would face would be the most famous Chosen from the south bank. Expression unsightly, he took a deep breath and then waved his hand, causing the air around him to distort. At the same time, a huge python appeared, accompanied by an acrid blast of wind. After the python coiled up, it rose nearly three meters into the air.

However, in almost the exact same moment that the young man’s wild beast appeared, and before he had time to do anything else, Shangguan Tianyou took a single step forward, his face completely expressionless. Suddenly, he vanished, and when he reappeared, he was right next to the gaunt young man, a sword in his hand, which he placed against the young man’s throat.

“You lose,” he said.

A cold feeling washed over the gaunt young man, and an expression of shocked disbelief filled his face as he turned slowly to look at Shangguan Tianyou. He knew instantly that he was no match for this opponent. How could he ever have imagined that he would lose so quickly? Head bowed, he collected his giant python and left the arena.

“We already won the first battle! Hahaha! The south bank is definitely going to win this time around!”

“Elder Brother Shangguan can definitely contend for first place!”

The south bank side of the arena was in an excited uproar. As for Bai Xiaochun, he stood there blinking. He hadn’t been able to see exactly what Shangguan Tianyou had done, but he could see that he was definitely beyond ordinary when it came to power.

Furthermore, two of the streams of divine sense from the prime elders began to pay closer attention to Shangguan Tianyou.

The north bank disciples were dumbfounded.

“Was that a minor teleportation? Impossible!! What cultivation base does he have? That couldn’t possibly have been teleportation!”

“It was void magic. This guy... definitely deserves to be known as the south bank’s number one Chosen. Even with a Qi Condensation cultivation base, he can actually use void magic!”

The other competitors from the north bank looked on with flickering expressions. Beihan Lie's eyes flickered somberly. The Gongsun siblings and Xu Song all had thoughtful expressions.

Only the black-robed Ghostfang simply remained in place, his eyes closed.

Before the crowd could calm down, Ouyang Jie's cold voice once again cut through the noise. "Second battle!"

From among the north bank Chosen, a rather pudgy young man stepped out. Smiling broadly, he seemed completely innocent and harmless.

"Xu Song of the north bank," he said to the disciple emerging from the ranks of the south bank.

His opponent was not Lu Tianlei or one of the other famous Chosen. He was from the group of secretive disciples who had only unleashed his power in the qualifying round. He had a long face, and wasn't very good-looking, but he was aware that the person he was facing was one of the north banks' five great Chosen.

"Zhou Feng of the south bank," he said. Taking a deep breath, he began to rotate his cultivation base. Performing an incantation gesture, he summoned a flying sword. However, before he could send it flying out, a derisive gleam appeared in Xu Song's eye, and he pushed his hand out in front of him.

Rumbling could be heard as a rift opened up directly above Zhou Feng. Then, cracking sounds could be heard as a gigantic crocodilian beast lunged out with lightning speed and gobbled him up in a single bite.

His flying sword lost its connection to spiritual power, and clattered down onto the ground.

“Fighting against Archway Peak disciples and ignoring the air above your head? How very disappointing.” Chuckling, Xu Song turned and walked out of the arena. When he waved his hand behind him, his beast opened its mouth and spat the unconscious Zhou Feng out in front of the stunned disciples of the south bank.

Unsightly expressions could be seen, and a few gasps rang out. As for Lu Tianlei and the other Chosen, their hearts trembled.

In sharp contrast, the north bank disciples were cheering loudly.

Bai Xiaochun was shaken at how terrifying the north bank people were. Their control over beasts was horrifyingly advanced.

Soon, the third battle began. The competitor from the north bank was one of their five great Chosen, Gongsun Wan'er. When she saw that her opponent from the south bank wasn't Zhou Xinqi, but rather one of the other random disciples, she looked a bit disappointed. Waving her hand, she had her seven-colored phoenix spit out a seven-colored mist.



When the seven-colored mist enveloped the south bank disciple, he suddenly seemed to go insane. Howling in rage, he began to strike wildly around him, as if fighting an invisible opponent. A moment later, he simply passed out.

From beginning to end, all Gongsun Wan'er did was wave her delicate hand. Afterward, she floated off out of the arena. The crowds from the south bank looked fearfully over at the north bank disciples, clearly shaken.

“The only people who can fight Chosen are other true Chosen.” The south bank disciples looked over at Shangguan Tianyou, hope shining in their eyes. Quite a few also looked at Bai Xiaochun the same way.

Bai Xiaochun immediately lifted his head high and stuck his chest out. Inwardly, though, he was terrified by what Gongsun Wan'er had just done.

“That wench is even more incredible than Zhou Xinqi,” he thought, his mouth going dry.

Next, the fourth battle began. Lu Tianlei flew out into the arena, surrounded by flickering lightning. His opponent from the north bank was the young man in the black robe who hadn't opened his eyes the entire time. At long last, his eyes opened, and he walked calmly out into the arena.

Strangely, no one from the north bank cheered for him at all.

Strange expressions could be seen on the disciples' faces, and as for the other Chosen, they simply took in deep breaths.

The crowd from the south bank was a bit shocked by this. As for Lu Tianlei, he kept his eyes glued on the young man.

The young man stood there quietly, face absolutely expressionless. When he spoke, his voice didn't seem to contain even a hint of emotion. "Ghostfang of the north bank."

"Lu Tianlei of the south bank!" Lu Tianlei took a deep breath. Well aware that he was facing the number one Chosen from the north bank, his eyes began to shine with the desire to do battle. "I'm not going to hold anything back. Even if I tire myself out so much I can't keep fighting, it will be worth it!"

Eyes burning with fighting spirit, he let out a powerful shout, causing the sparks around him to explode into a lake of lightning that expanded thirty meters in all directions.

At the same time, Ghostfang calmly pointed up into the sky. Instantly, black clouds began to seethe overhead. When the disciples from the north bank saw that, their expressions flickered, some with fear.

Howling, Lu Tianlei charged toward Ghostfang, surrounded by lightning.

Ghostfang, however, didn't even respond. He simply stood there,

and even went so far as to close his eyes.

“Are you looking to die?!” Lu Tianlei roared, feeling somewhat humiliated. After all, self-respect was critical to Chosen. With another roar, he caused the lake of lightning to redouble in size, and burst with even more power than before.

However, before he could even get close to Ghostfang, the black clouds up above were seemingly ripped apart, and a claw-like ghost hand reached out. It was enormous, like a huge column stretching down from the clouds, rushing toward Lu Tianlei with incredible speed and shocking pressure.

Even before it reached him, Lu Tianlei began to tremble, and then coughed up a mouthful of blood. The lightning around him shattered, and his feet sank into the ground, sending cracks ripping out in all directions.

Blood spurted out as wounds opened up all over him, and blood also oozed out of his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. He tried to struggle, but it seemed useless. Soon, his vision began to fade.

“No!!”

The terrifying ghost claw caused the disciples of both the north and south bank to be filled with terror. Their internal spiritual energy seemed to have been removed from their control, and their souls felt like they would be ripped out from their bodies.

Up on the balcony, the sect leader and the others looked on with flickering expressions.

“For thousand of years, no one has been able to successfully cultivate Ghosts Haunt the Night. I can’t believe this kid’s cultivation has reached this level!”

Xu Meixiang’s face suddenly fell. “Not good!”

Without another word, she flew down toward the arena floor at top speed. She arrived in the blink of an eye, whereupon she waved her hand at the ghost claw. Massive rumbling sounds echoed out as the ghost claw was pushed back. However, it didn’t collapse.

Blood sprayed out of Lu Tianlei’s mouth, and he collapsed into unconsciousness. Had Xu Meixiang been any slower, he would have been crushed into a bloody pulp, killed in body and soul.

Face darkening, Xu Meixiang looked over at Ghostfang.

“You little delinquent. You might have outstanding talent, but you’re far too ruthless. Trying to kill a fellow sect member right in front of us? Are you looking to die or something?!”

Ghostfang stood there silently for a moment, an odd expression developing on his face, almost as if he weren’t sure exactly how he should react.

“I just didn’t realize he would be so weak,” he said, sounding very

sincere. With that, he turned to leave the arena floor.

Xu Meixiang frowned and looked back up at the balcony above, seemingly a bit apprehensive. Finally, she gave a cold snort, picked up Lu Tianlei, and left. Lu Tianlei would not be able to continue fighting, and in fact, his injuries would take quite some time to recover from.

The north bank looked on silently, just as the south bank did.

Ghostfang walked back to the same spot he had been standing in, looking very lonely as he closed his eyes again.

After a long moment, the disciples of the north bank recovered their composure and began to cheer a bit.

“Nobody from the south bank is a match for us at all. We’re definitely going to win!”

“They lost three battles already. The first one was just a fluke. I bet they’ll lose all the rest of the battles too.”

In response to the taunting of the north bank, the south bank disciples could only stare furiously. The north bank... was simply too strong.

The south bank had won the first battle, but lost the following three. The top Chosen Lu Tianlei had almost been killed, and by now, the south bank disciples no longer harbored any thoughts of

securing their revenge.

Shangguan Tianyou glared angrily at Ghostfang. Inwardly, he was trembling, and even felt profound terror rising up in his heart.

He wasn't the only one. The other Chosen from the south bank, even Zhou Xinqi, were deeply shaken. Even if the only person the north bank had on their team was Ghostfang... they would still wipe the south bank away.

“That was beyond the power of Qi Condensation.... Not even a peak lord could wipe out that ghost hand. Wasn't that... one of the ten secret magics of the Spirit Stream Sect, one of only two that can be considered rare to the extreme... Ghosts Haunt the Night?”

“The only thing that can compare to Ghosts Haunt the Night is... the Waterswamp Kingdom!”

Bai Xiaochun had a very serious expression on his face, and his heart was pounding. Ghostfang's power left him jumpy to the extreme.

Eventually, the fifth battle began. The competitor from the north bank left the south bank disciples feeling as bitter as ever. He was one of the five great Chosen, a person who struck most others cold in the heart... Gongsun Yun.

Within his black robe, only his yellow eyes were visible, with insects crawling in and out of them. As he walked out, one of the

south bank disciples steeled himself and prepared to fight. Before he could even introduce himself, though, Gongsun Yun's eyes flickered coldly, and he waved his sleeve. Instantly, a buzzing sound could be heard as innumerable black bugs flew out toward the south bank disciple.

No matter how the south bank disciple fought, it was useless. He was soon covered with insects; none of his defenses could protect him at all. Soon, they began to bite into him as if to bore into his flesh. It was a shocking sight that not even the crowds from the north bank were used to seeing.

"I concede!!" cried the south bank disciple. He had the feeling that a single thought on the part of his opponent would cause the insects to devour him.

Gongsun Yun's eyes flickered scornfully as he turned to leave. The black bugs receded like tidewaters, landing on Gongsun Yun and crawling up into his sleeves.

When Bai Xiaochun saw all of that, his scalp went numb. Even Zhou Xinqi and Shanguan Tianyou felt their hearts sinking.

The rest of the south bank disciples couldn't help but ponder that the north bank seemed too powerful to even contend with. In their minds, the Chosen battles were already over.

"We're really going to lose...?"

“The north bank... is so strong!”

At the same time, the north bank disciples were elated.

“It’s like I said before. They won the first battle, but will lose the rest!”

“South bank? What a joke. They’ll always be beneath the north bank.”

“Thirty years ago the south bank only got one disciple into the top ten, and it looks... like it’ll be the same this time!”

When the south bank disciples heard such talk, they wanted to offer retorts, but couldn’t think of anything to say. The humiliation they felt was overwhelming.

After Gongsun Yun left the arena, Ouyang Jie’s voice could once again be heard. “Sixth battle. Would the disciples with marbles eleven and twelve please step into the arena!”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath as he looked down at the number eleven marble he held in his hand.



# Chapter 89: Just Concede

---

As Bai Xiaochun looked up, one of the north bank's five great Chosen, Beihan Lie, suddenly smiled. He was handsome to begin with, but his smile made him even more attractive to the countless female disciples who adored him.

Patting the ferocious Nightstalker Beast which lounged next to him, he took a step forward. The Nightstalker Beast slowly rose to its feet, eyes shining with mysterious light.

Almost as soon as the huge dog began to move, numerous north bank disciples began to cheer.

The Nightstalker Beast was roughly three meters tall, heavily muscled, and brimming with seemingly endless power. Its head was huge, and the enormous fangs which protruded from its mouth dripped with saliva. Its long black fur made it seem even more fierce.

Its legs were about as thick as an entire person, and had bone spurs sticking out all over them. It crouched down for a moment, then leaped out into the arena, where it threw its head back and roared.

The roar became a sound wave that rolled out in all directions. Many beasts belonging to other north bank disciples began to tremble and bow their heads, as if they were in the presence of royalty.

All smiles, Beihan Lie walked out and scanned the crowd from the south bank.

“Beihan Lie of the north bank. I wonder which fellow disciple I’ll be fighting today?”

At the same time, the huge dog’s saliva splashed down onto the ground, and it looked around with cold, brutal eyes. Its fangs even seemed to grow longer all of a sudden. Anyone who faced such a dog would surely lose their fighting spirit instantly, especially when it licked its lips, which made it look even more ferocious than before.

The crowd from the south bank was completely silent as they looked at the group up front, waiting for someone to step out and fight. Bai Xiaochun glanced at Beihan Lie and then the huge dog. After looking up thoughtfully for a moment, an odd expression appeared on his face. Clearing his throat, he proudly took a step forward.

Almost immediately, the eyes of numerous south bank disciples came to be fixed on him, and they shone with anticipation. The huge Nightstalker Beast’s shining green eyes also locked onto him.

Looking like a powerful hero, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin out and strode out into the arena. Up above, Elder Zhou’s bird looked down attentively.

“Bai Xiaochun of the south bank!” As soon as Bai Xiaochun announced himself, the Nightstalker Beast threw its head back and

howled, the brutal gleam in its eyes transforming into a murderous aura directed solely at Bai Xiaochun.

Beihan Lie took one look at Bai Xiaochun's getup, and did nothing to conceal the derision in his eyes. "Bai Xiaochun? I heard you took first place in the south bank qualifying round, is that right?"

Although Bai Xiaochun's heart trembled under the murderous gaze of the huge dog, he continued to hold himself like a powerful master, as lofty as a cloud floating in the sky. "You're Beihan Lie, right? I'll give you one chance to concede!"

Beihan Lie's jaw dropped. "Concede?"

He threw his head back and laughed uproariously, as if he had just heard the funniest joke in the world. However, a murderous gleam could be seen in his eyes.

"Very funny. In all the years, you're the first Outer Sect disciple who has ever dared to utter such words to me." Next, he extended his right hand and performed an incantation gesture, taking control of his Nightstalker Beast.

Bai Xiaochun sighed. Looking like a lonely hero, he gazed sadly at Beihan Lie and said, "Beihan Lie, this is your last chance to concede. When I attack, I frighten even myself. I'm telling you... the best thing would be to not force my hand."

The crowd from the south bank was struck mute. They stared, first at Bai Xiaochun, then at Beihan Lie, and then at the huge, ferocious dog. No matter which way they looked at the situation, Beihan Lie seemed to be far more powerful.

However, Bai Xiaochun's words at least put a seed of hope into the hearts of the south bank disciples. And yet, they couldn't help but remember the unsavory record of his past dealings, which filled their hearts with consternation.

As for the north bank audience, they roared with laughter and made all sorts of taunting statements.

“Is this guy a moron or what? Elder Brother Beihan is one of the five great Chosen. Although he might not be on the same level as Ghostfang, even Elder Brother Ghostfang has to admit that he's strong. Who does this Bai Xiaochun think he is? How arrogant!”

“Not only is Elder Brother Beihan strong, his Nightstalker Beast has been praised by the elders. It's the king of beasts, with a powerful fleshly body and boundless energy. Even its howl is enough to shock most people into a daze. Look at this Bai Xiaochun... he's so dainty the Nightstalker Beast will probably bite his leg off with a single bite!”

“Elder Brother Beihan will definitely win this one!”

Beihan Lie appeared to be highly amused by Bai Xiaochun. Eyes flashing coldly, he decided that he would teach him a hard, painful lesson. If he didn't kill him, he would shred his skin off. With that,

he performed an incantation gesture to begin the fight.

“I’m serious, my attacks frighten even me,” Bai Xiaochun said. Sighing, he slapped his bag of holding to produce two medicinal pills.

As that happened, Beihan Lie smiled viciously and finished his incantation gesture. Instantly, the eager Nightstalker Beast howled and began to charge toward Bai Xiaochun.

Beihan Lie also burst into motion, flying along, the sun mark on his forehead radiating bright light as he flew toward Bai Xiaochun.

However, even as the man and the dog flew toward him, Bai Xiaochun jumped up into the air and sent one of the medicinal pills flying toward the Nightstalker Beast.

The Nightstalker Beast’s eyes gleamed as it roared through the air. It obviously could have avoided the medicinal pill, but instead, its expression flickered, and it grabbed the pill and swallowed it down.

Instantly, a tremor ran through the huge dog, and its eyes went bloodshot. Rumbling sounds echoed out as it began to grow larger and more muscular.

Shockingly, its bone spurs and fangs also grew longer!

It began to salivate, and also, something rod-like... bulged out

between its legs!

Overall, it looked so ferocious and terrifying that it was difficult to put into words.

Its eyes became violet, and it began to pant. Mind muddled, it dug its claws into the ground, threw its head back, and let out a shocking howl, the sound of which caused the south bank disciples in the audience to gasp.

“What... what kind of medicinal pill was that!?!?”

“Hold on, why does that dog’s posture seem so familiar...?”

The disciples on the north bank were looking on with wide eyes. The changes in the Nightstalker Beast were obvious, and somehow, it now seemed even more terrifying than before. Not only was it stronger in terms of its fleshly body, it also seemed even more maddened than before. The north bank disciples were greatly shocked.

“That medicinal pill is so effective!”

“It can actually make wild beasts even more wild!!”

The audience was astonished, and so was Beihan Lie, who was unsure of exactly what was happening. Although the Nightstalker Beast was obviously a lot more powerful than before, he had the sinking feeling that something was wrong.

“I’ll warn you one more time,” Bai Xiaochun said coolly, sticking his jaw out. “Concede.”

Beihan Lie’s eyes shone with murderous light. “I’d only planned to break one of your arms, but since you’re trying to act so mysterious, I think I’ll break all of your limbs instead!”

Although taking lives was prohibited in the Chosen battles, serious injuries were often unavoidable. Even as the words left his mouth, he continued his charge toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and waved his right hand, sending one of his Pheromone Pills out toward Beihan Lie.

Afterward, he fell back at top speed until he was at the edge of the arena, where he stood nervously, looking at Beihan Lie.

Beihan Lie’s pupils constricted, and just when he was about to dodge out of the way, the pill detonated, transforming into a powder that filled the area. Even though he tried to avoid it, some of it happened to get on him.

His expression flickered. Assuming it was a poison pill, he fell back and quickly examined himself. However, he found nothing out of the ordinary except for a somewhat pleasant aroma.

A frown appeared on his face. The situation only seemed to be getting stranger and stranger. Just when he was going to attempt

to end the battle once and for all, a howl split the air.

It was none other than the Nightstalker Beast, which turned toward Beihan Lie, panting, its eyes shining bright red.

Beihan Lie's heart began to pound, and just when he was about to try to exert control over the dog, a terrifying roar shook everything, and the Nightstalker Beast began to charge in his direction. Its speed was incredible, giving Beihan Lie absolutely no time to dodge. Instantly, the Nightstalker Beast pounced on him.

“Dammit, are you crazy!?!? What are you doing?!” Beihan Lie's face darkened, and he roared in fury, but the huge dog had him pinned tight. Because of the maddened Nightstalker Beast, Beihan Lie couldn't move a muscle. Furthermore, he suddenly had a very terrifying premonition, and his face went pale.

At the same time, the Outer Sect disciples in the audience couldn't help but crane their necks to see what was happening. Even the peak lords and elders were watching closely, and the divine sense belonging to the prime elders was focused intently on the scene.

Next, everyone gasped as... Beihan Lie began to let out miserable shrieks!

“No... NO... YOU!! AIIIEEE!!!” Beihan Lie's bloodcurdling screams could shake heaven and earth. His expression was that of pain and confusion, as though he couldn't believe what was happening. Trembling, he could do nothing but scream.



The north bank disciples were in an uproar, and could hardly believe what they were seeing. Panting, their eyes filled with unprecedented fear and terror.

“Heavens!! What medicinal pill is that? It isn’t turning the dog crazy, it’s turning the dog... on!”

“Th-this... this....”

“Elder Brother Beihan is... being done by his battle beast?!”

Beihan Lie struggled frantically, and let out constant, desperate screams. What was happening now would become a legend the likes of which had never existed in the Spirit Stream Sect.

Even Ghostfang was watching with wide eyes, trembling in utter disbelief.

As for the south bank disciples, their minds were spinning, and they could hardly think straight. Shangguan Tianyou stared blankly, suddenly feeling as if the world were a much darker place than before. Zhou Xinqi, on the other hand, was blushing fiercely.

Bai Xiaochun stood off to the side, just as shaken as everyone else. This was his first time using his Aphrodisiac Pill in battle, and he had never imagined that the results would be so astonishing.... As he watched the screaming Beihan Lie, he couldn’t hold back from sighing.

Sounding very innocent, he said, “Like I said, even I am frightened by my attacks. I told you several times, but you... just insisted on doing things your way.”

It was at this point that an enraged roar filled the air as Beihan Lie’s Master finally intervened. “Bai Xiaochun!!”

Murderous aura raging, he leaped forward, flicking his sleeve to send the Nightstalker Beast spinning away off into the distance. Then he picked up Beihan Lie, who by this point had absolutely no face left. The Master almost felt as if what had just occurred wasn’t even real. Too embarrassed to stay, he glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun and then departed.

As for Beihan Lie, the mental and physical injuries he had sustained caused him to close his eyes and lapse into a coma. It was impossible to say when he would have the face to appear in public again. The pain he was in was like a living nightmare.

# Chapter 90: Archenemy Of The North Bank

---

As Beihan Lie and his Master left, the disciples of both the south and north bank looked on with wide eyes, their minds spinning, completely speechless. The only thing they could think about was what had just occurred with Beihan Lie and his huge dog....

They weren't the only flabbergasted ones; the sect leader, peak lords, and other elders were all struck mute. All they could do was stare down into the arena at the innocent-looking Bai Xiaochun.

Elder Zhou sat there trembling, his eyes bulging, mixed emotions written on his face.... As for the phoenix soaring in the air above, it let out a few piercing cries, as if to remind everyone that it had been tainted by Bai Xiaochun long ago.

Eventually, the sound of breathing could be heard, and the south bank Outer Sect disciples began to turn and look at Bai Xiaochun with strange expressions on their faces.

The female disciples were all blushing, and some even spat in contempt at him.

However, the male disciples were even more profoundly affected. Without exception, they all edged away from Bai Xiaochun, sweat popping out on their foreheads as sympathy for Beihan Lie rose up in their hearts.

Eventually, the crowd devolved into a hubbub.

“Sect... Sect Uncle Bai... is a god!! That Beihan Lie... will probably never recover from this injury....”

“Never, EVER provoke Sect Uncle Bai. He’s... he’s a complete menace!”

“Isn’t that the same medicinal pill he fed to Elder Zhou’s phoenix? It’s basically an aphrodisiac for beasts.... I can’t think of any possible reason why Sect Uncle Bai... would concoct something like that!”

Regardless of the methods used, Bai Xiaochun had won a victory for the south bank, only the second one so far. Although the south bank disciples weren’t really sure how to feel at the moment, they began to cheer for Bai Xiaochun.

Shangguan Tianyou wiped the sweat off his brow. He might have looked down on Bai Xiaochun with contempt before, but now he couldn’t help but gasp. When he thought back to Beihan Lie’s cruel fate, he couldn’t help but imagine what it would have been like if he had been in the same position.... After a moment, he cast such thoughts aside.

Zhou Xinqi was tongue-tied, her mind spinning.

Moments later, though, an even greater commotion could be heard, something like the rumble of thunder. The north bank disciples erupted in unprecedented fashion; it didn’t matter that they had won so many battles in the competition so far, and in

such amazing fashion. Now, everything had changed.

All of the north bank disciples, even the Inner Sect disciples who had come to observe the battles, were all incensed. Eyes bloodshot, they shouted out at the tops of their lungs.

“Demented!! What medicinal pill is that? Dammit! How can a pill like that even exist in the world? I’m gonna exterminate Bai Xiaochun and destroy that pill!!”

“Heavens! Elder Brother Beihan’s own beast pounced on him! This... this....”

“Take Bai Xiaochun down! Nobody has insulted the north bank like this in countless years!! That medicinal pill should be banned! Any of them that exist should be completely destroyed!!”

It was impossible for them not to be enraged. Even the male disciples from the south bank sympathized with Beihan Lie, much less those from the north bank, who felt his pain even more.... After all, every north bank disciple had a battle beast of some sort. Even as they shouted out in range, they subconsciously glanced down at their various respective battle beasts, and thought of Beihan Lie. They couldn’t help but feel uneasy as a result.

Soon, their maddened shouts grew even more extreme.

“Bai Xiaochun is the archenemy of the north bank!!”

“Down with Bai Xiaochun! The north bank will endure eternal humiliation as long as he lives!!”

“Dammit! I’m gonna kill him! I’m gonna exterminate him! He’s stained the north bank for all eternity!!” It was easy to imagine how in the future, every time the north bank disciples looked at their own battle beasts, they would think about the tragedy of Beihan Lie.

The Gongsun siblings’ breath came in ragged pants as they looked at Bai Xiaochun, their eyes shining with unprecedented fear, as well as rage. Although Beihan Lie had been the one to receive the injury, the entire north bank was hurt.

As for Xu Song, all the fat on his body trembled, and his expression was one of fury. Although he never got along with Beihan Lie, he couldn’t help but feel sorry for him. Deep inside, he felt sympathy, and even more so, terror.

“Beihan Lie could only control one battle beast.... I... I have five....” When he thought about that, Xu Song almost cried. Gnashing his teeth, he glared at Bai Xiaochun with furious, bloodshot eyes.

Even the black-robed Ghostfang trembled, a look of intense seriousness in his eyes as he stared at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked around innocently at the hornet’s nest he had stirred up. When he saw how mad the north bank disciples were getting, he quickly tried to offer an explanation.

“Hey, don’t blame me. Before the fighting even started, I told Beihan Lie to concede. He didn’t listen. I made it clear... that even I’m afraid of my own attacks!” Bai Xiaochun really felt that he was being given the short end of the stick. However, his explanations did nothing except pour fuel onto the fire.

“Bai Xiaochun!? I can’t believe you have a name like that! Dammit! You’re not pure at all!!”

“Completely shameless! Despicable! How dare you continue to humiliate us!!”

“Take Bai Xiaochun down!!”

The enraged north bank disciples began to edge forward, eyes bloodshot. From the look of it, tens of thousands of disciples were all about to charge onto the arena floor to take Bai Xiaochun out.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart began to thump, and he quickly retreated a few steps closer to the south bank audience. Sighing, he stuck his chin out, waved his sleeve, and stood there like a lonely hero.

“I am pure and good, no matter how anybody tries to smear me,” he said. Sighing, he finally left the arena floor. Behind him, countless north bank disciples were shouting in fury and staring daggers. If looks could kill, Bai Xiaochun would be dead many, many times over already.

He coughed dryly as he returned to the south bank side. Strange expressions could be seen on the faces of the disciples there; by this point, they could sense the intense anger the north bank felt toward him, and it was terrifying.

As of this moment, the true enemy of the north bank wasn't the south bank, it was a single person. Bai Xiaochun!

It was easy to imagine how, even if the north bank won the competition, because of Beihan Lie, they would consider it a loss....

The sect leader sat awkwardly up on the balcony, glaring down at Bai Xiaochun, his heart pounding with helplessness. He couldn't help but muse that whenever Bai Xiaochun showed up, it didn't matter how solemn the occasion was, the atmosphere would quickly devolve.... As for the three peak lords from the south bank, none of them were quite sure what expression was appropriate. They had never encountered a situation like this in their entire lives....

Li Qinghou's complexion flickered between green and red, and his eyes were blank. He had been completely shaken by what just occurred. Even the four prime elders on the peak of Mount Daoseed felt their divine sense shaking, and they weren't sure exactly what to think or feel.

Seeing that the anger of the north bank disciples was almost beyond control, Ouyang Jie suddenly spoke out in a voice which swept out and physically pushed the north bank disciples back.



“Let the seventh battle begin!” Instantly, a burly man flew out from among the north bank forces. His eyes were bright red as he landed on the arena floor, where he let out a roar of rage.

“Bai Xiaochun, I challenge you to fight!”

“Let’s wait and see if you can get into the top ten,” Bai Xiaochun replied, sticking his chin out like a lonely hero. “Then maybe you’ll qualify to fight me.” The burly man howled in fury, his eyes completely bloodshot. At the same time, the disciple standing next to Shangguan Tianyou braced himself and walked out onto the arena floor.

Booms echoed out. The north bank disciples had gone mad... and this burly man, the first to fight after Bai Xiaochun’s performance, was clearly venting his anger by fighting. The south bank disciple was pushed backward over and over again until he finally conceded.

Next were the eighth and ninth battles.... The north bank disciples might as well have been slaughtering chickens. They fought with enraged madness, their hearts bursting with anger. All of them wanted to get into the top ten to have a chance to fight Bai Xiaochun and cleanse the stain of humiliation!

“I have to win! Once I’m in the top ten, I’ll take Bai Xiaochun down. Then we’ll see how he likes to get pounced on by a wild beast!”

“Fudge! Even if I have to break the damn sect rules, I’m going to

cripple him!”

“Even if I kill him, my Master won’t punish me too badly. Anybody that kills Bai Xiaochun will be a hero to the north bank!” The north bank disciples used every means at their disposal in the fighting.

Because the north bank had two more people on their team than the south bank, the tenth battle was fought between two north bank disciples. However, they didn’t go easy on each other.

Soon, the final battle of the first round had arrived. Zhou Xinqi took a deep breath and walked out onto the arena floor, violet light flickering around her feet. Moments later, she began to fight the final north bank disciple.

The battle was not shocking or amazing. Zhou Xinqi was a Chosen, and although the north bank disciple she fought was extraordinary, he couldn’t compare to her at all. After only ten breaths of time passed, the north bank disciple coughed up a mouthful of blood and begrudgingly conceded.

As Zhou Xinqi walked back to the team, the south bank disciples erupted into cheering. When Bai Xiaochun heard it, he felt a bit sour inwardly. The cheering for Zhou Xinqi was clearly much louder than the cheering had been for him.

As of this moment, the first round of the Chosen battles was over. Eleven disciples remained; eight from the north bank, and three from the south bank!

# Chapter 91: The Enraged North Bank

---

Now that the first round was over, a rest period began that would last for three incense sticks worth of time. As everyone sat there, the north bank disciples bristled, glaring angrily... at Bai Xiaochun!

The contestants were all itching to begin the second round, in which they would do anything possible to take Bai Xiaochun out. By now, none of them cared whether or not the north bank won in the end; they merely wanted to shed his blood to wash away their humiliation!

“Bai Xiaochun, in the second round, I’m going to make you pay a horrifying price for humiliating the north bank!”

“He should be given to an entire pack of beasts to ease our hatred. This second round will be the most painful experience of his life!”

“Take Bai Xiaochun down! Take this shameless bastard down!”

The north bank cared about nothing but taking out Bai Xiaochun, and that responsibility was given to the eight people who had made it through the first round. Although Ghostfang simply sat there with his eyes closed, the other seven glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun with clenched fists.

They represented all of the other disciples of the north bank, and were now analyzing what they had learned about him from his previous performance. All of them were coming up with their own

ways of dealing with him.

“All Bai Xiaochun has are some medicinal pills. As long as he doesn’t have a chance to use them, he can be dealt with easily!”

“He only won because of those medicinal pills. Without them, exterminating him will be as easy as turning over your hand. He’ll definitely be defeated in the second round. Defeated, and defeated ruthlessly!”

As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, the north bank disciples were acting like bullies. He’d won, hadn’t he? As for the brutality of that victory... he wanted to say something in his defense, but was worried that if he said the wrong thing, it would only make things worse. Much worse.

“This is ridiculous!” he thought.

As the north bank stewed in their anger, the south bank disciples didn’t say much either. They simply sat there bristling until Ouyang Jie finally spoke.

“Three incense sticks have burned. The second round of the Chosen battles will now begin, and the top six will be selected!

“Of the eleven of you, one will sit out of the fighting and directly enter the top six. The other ten will draw lots and fight each other in twos to proceed!” Accompanying Ouyang Jie’s words, a beam of light shot out over the arena floor, which transformed into a

glowing sphere, roughly three meters in diameter. In turn, the pearls in the hands of Bai Xiaochun and the other remaining contestants were tugged toward it. Upon releasing the pearls, they flew directly toward the glowing sphere.

Once inside, new numbers appeared on their surfaces, from one to ten, with one of the pearls being blank.

The eleven pearls began to rotate inside the sphere, moving faster and faster until they were nothing more than a blur.

“A secret magic is at work here to ensure complete and utter fairness,” explained Ouyang Jie. “Not even I can interfere with the pearls. Rest at ease as you take the marbles back to decide the order of fighting.”

Xu Song glared at Bai Xiaochun and then chuckled coldly. “Bai Xiaochun, you’d better pray that you don’t fight me. I’ll crush you like a twig!”

With that, he waved his hand, causing a pearl to fly out into his hand.

One of the other north bank Chosen gritted his teeth and coldly said, “It doesn’t matter who you face, you’re definitely going to lose painfully in the second round!”

With that, he and everyone else, Bai Xiaochun included, made grasping motions to secure their pearls.

Instantly, ten pearls flew out toward the group of contestants.

“I have number three!”

“I’m number seven!”

“I got number one!” When the north bank disciples got their pearls, they announced the numbers. Soon, the order of fighting was becoming clear. After they announced their numbers, they looked ferociously toward Bai Xiaochun.

Eventually, Ghostfang got his pearl and coolly said, “Number nine!”

The north bank disciples soon found that not a single one of their number had acquired the blank pearl. As of this moment, the only pearls left were numbers four and ten, as well as the blank pearl. The north bank disciples began to look nervously over at the south bank.

“I’m number four!” Shangguan Tianyou announced coolly.

“Number ten!” Zhou Xinqi said, her face somewhat unsightly. As soon as the words left her mouth, she looked over at Ghostfang.

By now, everyone’s fighting spot had been determined, with the exception of Bai Xiaochun. Strange expressions appeared on the

faces of the south bank audience, especially the Fragrant Cloud Peak disciples, who had been there to watch Bai Xiaochun fight in the smaller competition. Their eyes went as wide as saucers.

“No way....” they thought incredulously.

Even more incredulous than them were the north bank disciples, who so badly wanted to teach him a lesson. Fists clenched, the entire group stared blankly at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't keep from looking a bit proud. The pearl in his hand had no number on it whatsoever. At first, he'd thought that he might have seen incorrectly. However, after closer examination, he confirmed that it was indeed blank. Then he looked around and realized that everyone was staring at him, and suddenly, he realized how lonely life could be sometimes.... Flicking his sleeve, he assumed the manner of a lonely hero, staring up into the clouds. Voice cool, he said, “My apologies. I'll be sitting this round out. If you want to fight me, you'll have to work hard to get to the next round.”

His words were met with a moment of silence. A few breaths' worth of time passed, and then the north bank audience erupted into enraged shouting.

“Impossible! Dammit, he's sitting the round out!? Why did it have to be him, the shameless Bai Xiaochun. Why?!?!”

“How could he be so lucky!? Out of eleven people, I can't believe that he gets to sit the round out!! How could someone like him

have luck like this!? It's preposterous!"

"I can't take this. What an absolute show-off! I HAVE to take him down!!"

The north bank disciples had intended to wash their humiliation clean with violence, but now that Bai Xiaochun was sitting the round out, they very nearly coughed up mouthfuls of blood. It was almost like they had just tried to punch Bai Xiaochun in the face, but ended up striking nothing but air. Frustration fermenting inside of them, Xu Song and the others stared at Bai Xiaochun as if they wished they could rip him to pieces right then and there.

Even the south bank disciples looked on with odd expressions, unsure of what to say. It was already obvious that the north bank disciples wanted to fight Bai Xiaochun more than anything else, so it wasn't even necessary to ponder how they felt regarding this sudden development.

"That's nothing!" blurted out a random Fragrant Cloud Peak disciple. "Back in the minor competition, Sect Uncle Bai... sat out for two rounds in a row!" When the people sitting around him heard that, their eyes went wide with disbelief.

"This happened to him before? Sect Uncle Bai's luck... is unbelievable!"

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, and yet again assumed the posture of a lonely hero. Looking over at the north bank side, he slowly shook his head. That, of course, made the north bank even



angrier.

However, getting angrier didn't change the situation at all. They had no option but to stifle their feelings as the second round of the Chosen battles began.

Unfortunately, without Bai Xiaochun fighting, the entire affair was a lot less interesting. Furthermore, the south bank only had two disciples in the mix, which meant that three of the battles would involve disciples from the north bank fighting each other.

The first battle was just such a situation. Gongsun Wan'er fought one of the other north bank disciples, and defeated him effortlessly. The defeated disciple trudged off of the arena floor, looking over his shoulder at the south bank side, mixed emotions playing across his face.

The second battle saw Shangguan Tianyou take the field. Luckily for him, he didn't face one of the top Chosen, but another random disciple, whom he defeated as easily as blowing some dust off of his shoulder. The south bank audience breathed sighs of relief. At least... they had secured victory in one fight.

Next, the north bank again fought itself in the third and fourth battles. Although the fighting was intense, the fact that the south bank wasn't involved at all ensured that the disciples that were from there simply looked on silently.

In the final battle, Zhou Xinqi walked out with a serious expression on her face. Although the south bank disciples cheered,

they weren't too optimistic about the outcome of the battle.

After all, Zhou Xinqi's opponent... was the terrifying Ghostfang, who had almost killed Lu Tianlei with the single wave of a finger.

After stepping out onto the arena floor, Ghostfang curiously asked, "Between you and that lightning guy, who's stronger?"

Sensing that his intention was not to humiliate her, Zhou Xinqi answered honestly: "Elder Brother Lu is a bit stronger."

"How about this...." Ghost replied quietly. "I used seventy percent power last time. This time, I'll only use forty percent. You probably won't get killed by that." Those who could hear him looked on with bitter smiles, convinced that Ghostfang was being honest.

Zhou Xinqi took a deep breath and then performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, countless blue sparks appeared around her, forming numerous blue flying silks. The flying silks then merged together into something that resembled a huge flower, that pulsed with a powerful gravitational force!

"Plant Transformation Incantation!" When the crowd from the south bank saw the Plant Transformation Incantation being used, their eyes glittered. Although it wasn't quite on the same level as Ghosts Haunt the Night or the Waterswamp Kingdom, it was one of the ten secret magics of the sect.

It was a unique magic that used plants against the enemy, with numerous variations that made it enigmatic and unpredictable. When Li Qinghou used it, he could create a world of plants and vegetation 50 kilometers wide. The final upgraded version of the secret magic had another name... Magic Plant Soldiers!

Using the magic was such a drain on Zhou Xinqi's energy that her face went pale. She knew that she wasn't a match for this opponent, but in her world, it wasn't an option to just concede without trying.

The wave of her hand caused the blue flower to tremble, and then grow larger at a rapid rate, simultaneously shooting toward Ghostfang. It almost looked like the flower was opening wide to consume him.

It was a spectacular sight that instantly attracted the attention of Bai Xiaochun, who found the magical technique particularly interesting. However, it was at this point that Ghostfang looked up calmly and then waved his finger.

This time, he didn't wave his finger at the sky, but at Zhou Xinqi. The air next to him began to vibrate, and a huge black ghost claw appeared, which quickly clenched into a fist!

The huge fist filled half of the arena floor, and was so big people couldn't see anything else. It smashed into the blue flower, which trembled and then collapsed into ashes. The ghost claw, however, didn't stop. It continued on as if nothing had happened, smashing directly into Zhou Xinqi.

A massive boom echoed out, and blood sprayed out of Zhou Xinqi's mouth as she tumbled backward. She was knocked out of the arena floor, and when she finally ground to a halt, she coughed up eight mouthfuls of blood. Face pale, she looked up with a stubborn gleam in her eyes to see Ghostfang turning and walking away.

Everything was silent except for the gasps that echoed out....

## Chapter 92: The Despair Of Gongsun Wan'er

---

After a protracted moment of silence, both the south and north bank audiences broke out into hushed discussions.

“S-so... so strong!”

“Ghostfang could probably crush Inner Sect disciples with ease! He must be the strongest disciple under Foundation Establishment!”

“That’s the ultimate battle prowess of the Qi Condensation stage! He’s definitely reached the realm of will. Only by possessing a mysterious and unfathomable will can someone produce such terrifying power!”

It was almost as if no one dared to speak in a loud voice. The north bank Chosen looked on with mixed emotions. After all, no one would be happy to have someone so powerful appear among their generation. On the south bank side, Shangguan Tianyou stood there silently, his heart anything but calm. Watching Ghostfang defeat the other Chosen was just like watching a Chosen defeat ordinary disciples.

It was more than clear that Ghostfang existed on a totally different plane than even the other Chosen.

Bai Xiaochun was left trembling. He had only seen Ghostfang make two attacks, and yet each one had been completely astonishing.

By this point, the top six had been selected. The north bank had four, and the south bank had two. They were Shangguan Tianyou, Bai Xiaochun, Ghostfang, the Gongsun siblings, and Xu Song.

Those disciples who were familiar with the Chosen battles knew that the next round, round three, would be the final round. The matches to follow, and the resulting victories and defeats, would determine the final ranking of the top six disciples!

Anyone who could secure five victories would naturally take first place!

During the past thousand years, the north bank had always swept the south bank and taken the top spots. Furthermore, the south bank disciples all knew that Ghostfang... was exactly the type of person who could defeat everyone else. He was simply too powerful.

The south bank audience sat there quietly. If Ghostfang weren't in the picture, they might hold hope that Shangguan Tianyou could take first place.

"Second place isn't bad though...." That was what many of the south bank disciples were thinking as they sat there sighing. Some of them looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Many had a hard time determining exactly what they thought of him, but regardless of the specifics, he hadn't given any of them the impression that he was a fighter. In fact, he hadn't fought anyone since joining the sect.

The only thing they did know for certain was that he had come back alive after the Luochen Clan tried to chase him down and kill him....

Many of the south bank disciples had already resigned themselves to the fact that the south bank had lost, both in terms of the number of disciples who made it into the top ten, and also the first place spot.

In contrast, the north bank disciples were getting excited. Their eyes shone with anticipation and ferocity as they glared at Bai Xiaochun.

“The rules for the top six probably haven’t changed. This time, Bai Xiaochun is definitely going to be hurting!”

“That’s right. According to the rules, everyone will fight once with all the other disciples. That means... that four blazing suns from the north bank will all have a chance to pummel him. Finally, the humiliation our north bank has endured will be avenged!”

It wasn’t just the ordinary north bank disciples who were musing in such a way. Xu Song and the Gongsun siblings were all chuckling coldly as they stared at Bai Xiaochun, determined to come out victorious.

Bai Xiaochun shrunk back a bit. Looking over at the furious north bank disciples, he shook his head a bit helplessly. “Immortal cultivation is supposed to be about living forever. What’s the point

of all the fighting and killing...?”

It was at this point that Ouyang Jie’s voice finally rang out. “The third round of the Chosen battles will follow the same rules as before. Victory will be given to whoever takes the most wins. The first set of matches will be Shangguan Tianyou versus Xu Song, Ghostfang versus Gongsun Yun, and Bai Xiaochun versus Gongsun Wan’er. These fights will be carried out simultaneously!”

With that, a beam of light descended from the balcony onto the arena floor, dividing it into three areas. Sealing barriers immediately sprang up to separate them.

Shangguan Tianyou’s eyes flickered brightly as he dashed out into the first battle zone. At the same time, Xu Song also flew out. The two of them locked eyes, both of their expressions grave.

They wasted no time on words. Xu Song waved his hand, and three fierce beasts materialized around him. Each one was unique, but they were all incredibly ferocious in appearance. Even as they began to charge Shangguan Tianyou, a huge crocodilian mouth appeared above him, which closed in to consume him.

In addition to all that, the ground beneath his feet cracked as numerous tentacles burst out.

Meanwhile, Ghostfang strode forward into the second battle zone. Off to the side, Gongsun Yun stood there quietly. Although the bugs which writhed in his eyes were powerful, he knew that he was no match for Ghostfang. Despite that, he wasn’t willing to



simply concede.

“Even if you were more powerful than you already are, I’d still want to fight you!” Taking a deep breath, he joined Ghostfang in the second battle zone.

Gongsun Wan’er snorted coldly as she stepped forward, glaring at Bai Xiaochun.

Of all the disciples present, Bai Xiaochun feared her the least, so he tromped forward to the third battle zone, meeting her gaze with his own glare.

As Bai Xiaochun walked out, the north bank disciples heckled him furiously. Completely ignoring the other two battle zones, their attention and fury was directed solely upon Bai Xiaochun.

“Elder Sister Gongsun, eradicate that damned Bai Xiaochun!”

“Kill him!”

Gongsun Wan’er’s eyes flickered with cold light. Instead of summoning her seven-colored phoenix, she performed an incantation gesture and then tapped down on her forehead. Seven-colored light immediately sprang out from within her, accompanied by a frigid blast of cold air which covered the ground in frost.

“Why don’t you concede?” Bai Xiaochun said, blinking. “When I

attack, I frighten even myself.”

Almost immediately, an image popped up in Gongsun Wan'er's mind of Beihan Lie's tragic fate, and her face flushed. At the same time, a murderous aura rose up within her.

“Shut up, you perv. I'm gonna make you pay a heavy price for what you've done!” With the wave of a hand, she summoned an ice blade which then shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun shrugged helplessly. He had merely been telling the truth, and wasn't sure why he'd been called a perv. Sighing, he slapped his bag of holding, causing countless talismans to appear, which he began to slap down all over his body.

Rumbling sounds could then be heard as numerous shields sprang up. Soon, they were nearly three meters thick, glittering with multicolored light. It was a shocking sight, and yet, Bai Xiaochun wasn't finished yet. Next, he produced the Divine Crane Shield, which glittered brightly as it produced yet another shield layer.

Then there was the bracelet Li Qinghou had given him. As soon as he activated it, it spread out to cover his entire body, turning him pitch black.

Considering he was also wearing a big black wok on his back, Bai Xiaochun looked... completely eye-catching.

Furthermore, the speed and ease with which he activated all of his defenses made it obvious that he was very familiar with doing so....

The north bank disciples' eyes widened, and they watched blankly as the ice blades slammed into Bai Xiaochun's shields, breaking some of them, but eventually shattering.

Bai Xiaochun remained inside, completely unharmed.

If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal, but what was most infuriating was that Bai Xiaochun merely stood there, hands clasped behind his back, chin sticking out, looking up at the clouds like a hero.

“Too weak,” he said, flicking his sleeve and then placing his hands behind his back again. “But then again, I’ve never met anyone who could break through all of my shields.”

Gongsun Wan'er's eyes seemed to be on the verge of popping out of her skull. She had fought many people in her life, but had never met anyone so adept in using defensive shields. Bai Xiaochun was the first.

She could see that he had dozens of ordinary shields protecting him, plus the Divine Crane Shield, the black substance covering his skin, the huge wok on his back, and numerous leather jackets. She was left feeling annoyed, uneasy, and even a bit taken aback.

The north bank audience wasn't happy either.

“Completely shameless!! I can't believe he has so many defensive talismans and magical items. Dammit! These are the Chosen battles, not the resource battles!”

“Elder Sister Gongsun has to wipe him out. I'm about to explode! Just looking at him makes me want to walk over and beat the crap out of him!”

The north bank audience was incensed, and the south bank audience simply looked on in a daze. Of course, there were some disciples from Fragrant Cloud Peak who sighed inwardly. That was especially true of one burly man. When he saw what was happening, tears welled up in his eyes. He knew exactly how the north bank disciples felt. Back in the minor competition years before, Bai Xiaochun had tormented him in exactly this same way.

Up on the balcony, the sect leader and the others almost couldn't believe their eyes, and quickly began to exchange wry grins.

Gongsun Wan'er gritted her teeth and performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Immediately, a vast quantity of ice blades appeared, transforming into a vortex that shot toward Bai Xiaochun. Booms echoed out over and over again as the razor-sharp blades sliced into Bai Xiaochun's shields. Although many of the shields were destroyed, the flickering Divine Crane Shield eventually made short work of the ice blades.

“Still too weak,” Bai Xiaochun said loftily. Inwardly, happiness

blossomed in his heart like a flower as he realized what it felt like to be a powerful expert.

The north bank disciples were in a frenzy. If it weren't for the fact that they didn't dare to break sect rules, they would surely have charged over en masse to slaughter Bai Xiaochun.

Gongsun Wan'er's eyes were bloodshot. Gritting her teeth, she continued to unleash attacks, using even more ice blades than before. The sheer number involved was shocking, to the point where even Bai Xiaochun's heart began to tremble in fear. After some time passed, his shields finally gave out completely, whereupon he drew upon the full power of the Divine Crane Shield. In the blink of an eye, his defenses were shored up, and he breathed a sigh of relief. He stuck his chin out, and just when he was about say something, the bedraggled Gongsun Wan'er let out a piercing scream. Rumbling sounds echoed out, and blood oozed out of the corners of her mouth. Astonishingly, a blood-colored ice flower appeared on her forehead, which caused the energy of heaven and earth to flow toward her in shocking fashion.

As this happened, the north bank disciples began to cheer at the top of their lungs.

“It's Elder Sister Gongsun's Bloodfrost Orchid!”

“The Bloodfrost Orchid is Elder Sister Gongsun's trump card. Not even someone in the ninth level of Qi Condensation could block it. Bai Xiaochun's defenses are definitely going to be broken through this time!”

As the freezing flower flew out, radiating a terrifying aura, it caused the surrounding temperature to drop rapidly. It shot toward Bai Xiaochun at top speed, cutting through his defenses like a hot knife through butter. His shields shattered, and just when he was about to use the Divine Crane Shield, the Bloodfrost Orchid split into two parts. One part was successfully blocked, but the other twisted past to slam violently into Bai Xiaochun's chest.

A banging sound could be heard, and Bai Xiaochun looked down in surprise. To him, it felt like getting hit with a fluffy snowball. Shivering slightly, he looked up at Gongsun Wan'er, whose hair was by now completely disheveled.

"Take your time," he said. "I'm going to watch some of the other matches." With that, he turned in the direction of the first and second battle zones, which he began to casually watch, even occasionally cheering for one side or the other. No matter your perspective, he looked like he was asking for a beating.

## Chapter 93: What A Useful Pill

---

In the second battle zone, Ghostfang was just on the verge of waving his finger through the air a second time. He could defeat most people with the single wave of a finger, but not Gongsun Yun.

As for Gongsun Yun, he dashed backward at top speed and barked that he conceded. He had been able to stand up to one of Ghostfang's finger attacks, but any more, and he would suffer serious injuries. Knowing that he had no chance of taking first place, he decided that contending for second place would be the best thing to do.

Clasping his hands to Ghostfang, he left the arena floor. As he did, he glanced over in the direction of Gongsun Wan'er, and frowned.

Ghostfang's expression was placid as he left the arena floor and returned to where he had been standing all along. When he looked over at Bai Xiaochun and all of his defenses, a strange gleam appeared in his eyes.

The audience members from the south bank were all looking down, averting their gazes from the scene playing out on the arena floor.... Embarrassed, they actually felt sorry for the north bank.

The north bank disciples were going crazy....

Gongsun Wan'er was frantic, screaming as she launched one attack after another at Bai Xiaochun, using every technique she

could think of. She unleashed countless divine abilities and magical techniques, and yet, nothing could break Bai Xiaochun's defenses.

After all, his final line of defense was the black bracelet, a life-saving magic that could protect him from a blow by a Foundation Establishment cultivator. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, Gongsun Wan'er coughed up a mouthful of blood and collapsed onto the ground, staring at Bai Xiaochun with listless despair.

She was about to summon her phoenix when Bai Xiaochun looked over at her and suddenly produced a medicinal pill, which he began to toss up and down in his palm....

Furious, Gongsun Wan'er clenched her hands into fists.

"I concede!!" she said begrudgingly, eyes flickering with defiance.

Clasping hands and looking as superior as possible, he said, "You let me win. It seems you know what's best, and didn't force me to attack!"

In response to his words, tears leaked out of the eyes of the south bank disciples. Gongsun Wan'er was so mad she was shaking. Gritting her teeth, she stalked off of the arena floor.

It was at this point that the battle between Shangguan Tianyou and Xu Song reached its conclusion. Shangguan Tianyou's sword



descended, and intense light shone out in all directions. Xu Song's five beasts were all in bad shape, and he himself staggered backward several paces, looking at Shangguan Tianyou in admiration.

"It turns out sword spirit bodies really are pretty incredible!" he said, blood oozing out of his mouth. Finally, he turned and walked off of the arena floor.

Shangguan Tianyou didn't respond. Instead, he looked over at Ghostfang, his eyes glittering, completely convinced of who his only true opponent was!

"Presumably, he feels the same way I do," he thought, "that fighting against these other people is simply boring." Shangguan Tianyou retrieved his flying sword and looked over at Bai Xiaochun. When he saw all of his defenses, a gleam of scorn appeared in his eyes. Finally, he walked off of the arena floor, accompanied by the cheers of the south bank disciples.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun walked proudly back to his spot.

The first set of matches of the third round was over. The victors were Ghostfang, Shangguan Tianyou, and Bai Xiaochun, with the losers being Xu Song and the Gongsun siblings.

Of course, not many people had paid much attention to the victories won by Shangguan Tianyou and Ghostfang. Most people had been focused on Bai Xiaochun's repeated shamelessness.

Bai Xiaochun had succeeded... in completely altering the atmosphere of the competition. In fact, it was hard to say exactly how much he had influenced the sect as a whole....

The north bank disciples' eyes were bright red, their hands clenched into fists as they glared at Bai Xiaochun. As tens of thousands of eyes stared at him, he scratched his nose, pretending not to notice.

Gongsun Wan'er was so angry she was shaking. Her brother, Gongsun Yun, murmured something to her, after which she clenched her teeth and sat down cross-legged to restore her energy. Everyone else soon followed suit.

The rest period lasted for the time it takes three incense sticks to burn. After that, the second match of the third round formally began!

In the first battle region, Ghostfang was up against Gongsun Wan'er. As soon as she stepped into the battle region and faced the expressionless Ghostfang, she conceded. She couldn't afford to be injured, lest it affect her subsequent matches.

With Gongsun Wan'er having conceded, Ghostfang took another victory.

Meanwhile, in the second battle region, booms echoed out as Shangguan Tianyou fought Gongsun Yun, who had managed to stand up to Ghostfang for one finger attack. Bugs poured out of Gongsun Yun's sleeves, blotting out the sky as they rushed toward

Shangguan Tianyou.

Shangguan Tianyou's expression turned slightly more somber as he waved his right hand, sending a flying sword buzzing out, bursting with sword qi.

It should have been a battle that everyone watched closely. However... audiences from both the south bank and the north bank were all staring at the third battle zone.

That was where Bai Xiaochun had loftily taken the stage to fight against Xu Song!

Xu Song looked over at him with a cold smile.

"You might be good with medicinal pills and defenses. But now that you've met me, you're doomed to meet a painful end!" With that, Xu Song waved his hand violently through the air, causing cracking sounds to ring out as three beasts appeared out of thin air. One of them was a three-meter-tall gorilla, another was a huge tiger, and the last... was a gigantic bat.

As soon as they appeared, they radiated powerful energy that would crush even someone in the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

"Alright, Bai Xiaochun, let's see if your defenses can stand up to a sustained volley by my three battle beasts!" Smiling viciously, he prepared to attack.

“Why don’t you concede?” Bai Xiaochun said. Sighing, he produced an Aphrodisiac Pill and looked sympathetically over at Xu Song.

The north bank disciples were thrown into fits of rage.

“He said it again!”

“Eradicate Bai Xiaochun!”

When Xu Song saw the medicinal pill, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Face filled with derision and even complacency, he said, “I knew all along that you would try to use that shameless medicinal pill. Did you really think I would come unprepared? I set these three battle beast aside just for you. They’re all female!”

It was because of this that Xu Song was so confident, convinced that he would be able to give the north bank a chance to get revenge.

When the north bank disciples heard his words, they instantly got excited, and began to cheer for Xu Song.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart thumped, and his eyes turned up in thought. After a moment, he looked back at Xu Song, eyes filled with sympathy as he said, “This medicinal pill is effective on humans too, not just animals.”

With that, he looked meaningfully at Xu Song's three female battle beasts.

His words sent the north bank disciples into complete silence. They stared in shock, subconsciously visualizing certain scenes in their mind, cruel scenes that caused them to gasp.

Xu Song's eyes went wide, and his mind filled with thunderous rumbling. His face drained of blood as he contemplated how both Beihan Lie and Gongsun Wan'er had both lost. He suddenly realized that if what Bai Xiaochun said was true, and the medicinal pill's aphrodisiac effects worked on people.... He swallowed nervously. Without even thinking about it, he edged away from his three battle beasts, trembling. In turn, the three battle beasts, intelligent as they were, looked over at Xu Song and also began to tremble.

Without the slightest hesitation, Xu Song quickly put them away, not daring to bet that Bai Xiaochun was bluffing. Even though he had the feeling that Bai Xiaochun was most likely lying, he didn't want to risk it.

Even as the trembling Xu Song put away his battle beasts, Bai Xiaochun strode forward. Light flickered as his defenses went up, and as he closed in on Xu Song, he reached his right hand back and then waved it out in front of him.

A blast of power surged out. Xu Song's strength lay in his control of beasts, and at the moment, he didn't dare to use even a single one. That cut his effective power in half, and made it impossible for him to stand up to Bai Xiaochun. He was instantly sent flying,

blood spraying out of his mouth. When he staggered to a stop, rage and humiliation filled his eyes as he shrieked that he conceded.

Bai Xiaochun blinked and then cleared his throat. Clasping hands and bowing, he strutted off the arena floor amidst the countless enraged curses from the north bank disciples.

“Bai Xiaochun, y-y-you...”

“That damned medicinal pill ought to be destroyed!”

“Heavens! I’ll pay ten spirit stones to anyone who can take down Bai Xiaochun!”

“I’ll put in fifty spirit stones! Take him out!” The north bank was going crazy, and countless people began to shout out that they would add spirit stones as well. Soon the total was over 10,000. The shocked south bank disciples looked at Bai Xiaochun, their admiration for him growing by leaps and bounds.

The huge bounty caused Bai Xiaochun’s face to flicker, and he hurried to escape the arena floor. It felt like a cold wind was blowing up his back, especially when the total bounty passed 20,000 spirit stones. His heart began to thump.

“You people are so unreasonable!” he said loudly, hoping to explain. “Every single time I go out there, I always give them a chance to concede!”

His explanation only further enraged the north bank disciples, and soon the spirit stone bounty reached 30,000. Up overhead, the phoenix reveled in Bai Xiaochun's misfortune, and let out continuous piercing cries.

The elders on the balcony were getting more and more amused.

"I'm a Prestige disciple!" Bai Xiaochun cried threateningly. "I'm the Junior Brother of the sect leader. If anybody tries to put a bounty on me, I'll have my Master kick them out of the sect!"

Then... the north bank disciples went even crazier. It was hard to say who lost control first, but a flying sword appeared and shot toward the arena floor. Countless north bank disciples all produced various magical items, and their battle beasts roared as if they were preparing to fight a bloody war.

Bai Xiaochun fled in terror. Thankfully, the sect elders on the balcony couldn't let matters go any further. With a single glance, they held back the north bank disciples.

It was around this time that the battle between Shangguan Tianyou and Gongsun Yun ended. Shangguan Tianyou had used three flying swords, and Gongsun Yun had gone all out with everything he possessed. In the end, Gongsun Yun conceded, ending the fight.

Shangguan Tianyou was slightly out of breath. Gongsun Yun had been strong enough that he had been forced to really start fighting hard. When he left the arena floor and noticed how enraged the

north bank disciples were, he frowned and looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Although his eyes flickered with contempt, his heart twinged with jealousy.

“Relying only on medicinal pills and defenses? I can’t believe we’ve reached the same stage! Hmph!” With that, Shangguan Tianyou sat down cross-legged and closed his eyes to do breathing exercises.



## Chapter 94: Sect Uncle Bai, We're On The Same Side

---

“The Chosen battles this time around... ai.” Up on the balcony, Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong shook his head helplessly. The peak lords sitting around him smiled wryly.

The Chosen battles were supposed to be a solemn occasion, but not this time around, and everyone knew it.... Things had begun normally, but the simple addition of Bai Xiaochun into the mix turned everything sour.

“Bai Xiaochun... his name sounds good, but he isn't the least bit pure in any sense of the word.” Elder Zhou chuckled wryly, looking down at Bai Xiaochun hiding in the crowd, and then over at the countless enraged north bank disciples.

It was at this point that the peak lord from Irispetal Peak, the old woman, smiled darkly and said, “It's fine. Bai Xiaochun might be naughty and mischievous, but he's made himself the archenemy of the entire north bank. We just need to find an opportunity to transfer him to the north bank; that would calm him down quite a bit.”

The eyes of the others present flickered thoughtfully. The only one who reacted differently was Li Qinghou, who looked over at the old woman sympathetically. Based on how well he knew Bai Xiaochun, he was fairly certain that if Bai Xiaochun was transferred to the north bank, the unlucky party wouldn't be him....

As the group continued to ponder the situation, the third match began.

Ghostfang fought Xu Song, and Shangguan Tianyou took on Gongsun Wan'er, but neither battle was even worth watching. Both Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou were so strong that they won easily.

The disciples of both banks, as well as the sect leader and the others, were all watching the third battle zone. Gongsun Yun was the first to enter the area, pulsing with energy and icy coldness. Moments later, Bai Xiaochun strolled up, looking like a powerful hero.

Instead of yelling in rage, the north bank disciples glared murderously. To have so many eyes glaring at him like that left Bai Xiaochun more than a little jumpy.

Taking a deep breath, he looked over at Gongsun Yun. Aphrodisiac Pill in hand, he said, "Why don't you concede?"

Gongsun Yun looked coldly back at him, eyes shining with hatred. Waving his sleeve, he sent countless black beetles flying out from within his clothes. There were also red centipedes that scurried across the ground at top speed.

The sight of so many bugs was completely shocking.

Voice cool, Gongsun Yun gave Bai Xiaochun no chance to say anything further. “My bugs might be classified as male and female, but they’re not beasts. Your medicinal pill won’t work on them.”

The bugs caused an ear-splitting droning sound to fill the air. They were like a sea, surging directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

Every bug that made up the sea possessed a certain level of attack power. Although defensive shields could resist them, when their power was combined, they would be quite formidable. Bai Xiaochun was even fairly certain that in this situation, Gongsun Yun actually had a bit of an advantage.

“Don’t force my hand, Gongsun Yun,” Bai Xiaochun shouted, backing up at top speed, his face paling. “Concede immediately. I really don’t want to attack, you know. Once I do... you’re done for!”

Gongsun Yun chuckled coldly. “Let’s see which happens first, your flesh getting eaten off your bones, or me being done for.” Looking even more scornful than before, he waved his hand, sending even more bugs surging forth.

The crowd from the south bank looked on in fear and astonishment. Everyone watching had already been convinced of how powerful Gongsun Yun was. Not only was he adept at using bugs, he also had powerful magical techniques. He was able to defend against one of Ghostfang’s finger attacks, and even forced Shangguan Tianyou to attack three times with his sword, tiring him out significantly.

The north bank audience looked on, their excitement building.

“Nice job, Elder Brother Gongsun! Take Bai Xiaochun down!”

“Hahaha! Let’s see how you fight back this time, Bai Xiaochun! You just wait! Those bugs are going to burrow into your flesh and eat you alive!”

“Your comeuppance is at hand, Bai Xiaochun!” The countless north bank disciples were extremely excited. Furthermore, their battle beasts could sense their masters’ excitement, and began to howl in response.

In the blink of an eye, the black beetles were right in front of Bai Xiaochun, slamming into his defensive shields, ripping and tearing at them with their mandibles. The shields quickly began to fade and grow dim.

Then the red centipedes arrived, causing his defenses to weaken even more quickly. Some of them even managed to gnaw their way past the shields.

Bai Xiaochun’s scalp tingled with fright, and his eyes went bloodshot.

“Gongsun Yun, you’re forcing my hand!” Bai Xiaochun was reaching the point of having no choice but to use his trump card, something he’d hoped to avoid. Taking a deep breath, heart

pounding, he sent a surge of energy into the shields, blasting away a significant portion of the bugs. Even as they turned to charge back toward him, an Aphrodisiac Pill appeared in his hand, which he threw in the direction of the north bank audience.

The pill shot through the air with a whooshing sound, and before anyone could react, was in the air above the stands on the north side of the arena. The disciples gaped in shock, and at the same time, Bai Xiaochun shouted, “Detonate!”

A boom rang out as the Aphrodisiac Pill exploded, transforming into ash which drifted down in all directions, covering nearly half of the north bank disciples.

Gongsun Yun’s eyes went wide with shock.

Bai Xiaochun actually wasn’t sure whether or not the pill would have an effect on humans; he had never dared to personally test out any of the strange pills he’d concocted. However, he was certain that the pill was effective on animals, and would stimulate them to a shocking degree.

In the blink of an eye, the ash that was the remains of the Aphrodisiac Pill had fallen down onto the battle beasts below, which began to throw their heads back and howl. Their bodies grew larger, their eyes turned red, and they began to pant heavily. In turn, their masters cried out in alarm and began to back up.

It took only a moment for the north bank disciples to devolve into a stampede, quickly clearing the entire area of people. The

only thing that remained were the howling beasts, sitting there looking around for a target.

The north bank disciples all began to shriek at the tops of their lungs. “Bai Xiaochun!!”

At the same time, beads of sweat popped out on Gongsun Yun’s forehead, which was shocking considering that after beginning to cultivate the Dao of bugs, he had never sweat.

Now, though, he was panting heavily as Bai Xiaochun slowly pulled out another medicinal pill. As soon as he did, the stimulated battle beasts began to tremble in excitement. Gongsun Yun couldn’t help but think about what had occurred when a pill just like that had been shattered and then spread onto Beihan Lie.

“You....”

An intense feeling of foreboding rose up in his heart, and he began to tremble. Images flashed through his mind, and he began to back up. Even his legs were shaking. He could well imagine what would happen if Bai Xiaochun crushed that pill on him... and then the battle beasts pounced.

“You forced my hand,” Bai Xiaochun said with a despairing scowl. “I didn’t want to do this.” With that, he pulled his hand back in preparation to throw the pill.

“I concede!!” shrieked Gongsun Yun in the most high-pitched

voice that had left his mouth in his entire life. His face was ashen as he raced off of the arena floor. Only when he was safe amongst the crowd did he look back in fright at Bai Xiaochun.

“Uhhh...” Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped at the sight of the terrified Gongsun Yun hiding in the crowd. Then he looked at the trembling battle beasts, and suddenly had a very bad feeling.

Many of them were howling at the tops of their lungs, eyes fixed directly on the medicinal pill he held in his hand. They were already started to edge toward him. Drops of sweat broke out on his forehead, and he suddenly turned to look at the crowd of north bank disciples.

That simple turn of his head caused the north bank disciples’ hearts to seize with fear.

Bai Xiaochun turned to look in another direction, but quickly found that any place he looked at would quickly become devoid of people. Everyone would scramble away at top speed, screaming in desperation.

Finally, his gaze came to rest on the south bank disciples.

Instantly... their scalps went numb, and they began to back up. In the blink of an eye, everyone had retreated by thirty meters.

“We’re on the same side, Sect Uncle Bai!” people began to cry out. “The same side!”

Even Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou were backing up, their faces flickering with shock.

ROAR! More of the stimulated battle beasts began to walk forward, their eyes crimson, salivating as they eyed Bai Xiaochun.

“What do I do?” he thought. “What do I do?! Didn’t I warn you people to concede? Didn’t I say that I fear my own attacks!?”

Feeling that he was completely innocent in the matter, he gritted his teeth and looked over at the north bank audience. “Didn’t you people just say something about putting a bounty on my head?!”

None of the trembling north bank disciples dared to even look Bai Xiaochun in the eye.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was also trembling. In his heart, he believed himself to be a good person, and wasn’t willing to simply throw the pill out in a random direction. Anxiety building up within him, he looked at the increasingly stimulated battle beasts, and then finally happened to glance up into the sky above him and notice the proud, arrogant phoenix of Elder Zhou’s.

Eyes shining, and having no time to consider the matter, he launched the medicinal pill at top speed toward the phoenix; it transformed into a beam of light shooting through the air.

The phoenix was in the middle of gloating over Bai Xiaochun’s



misfortune, and didn't even notice the pill flying toward him at first. When he did, his feathers all stood on end, and he let out a miserable shriek. Just when he was about to dodge, the pill exploded, covering him with a fine powder.

The phoenix stared in shock as the battle beasts below began to howl. Eyes burning as if with fire, they began to leap up into the air as if to chase down the phoenix.

The sect leader and the others gasped, crowding around the edge of the balcony to look down at what was happening.

At one point, one of the random elders asked, "Is attacking the audience... against the rules?"

However, nobody seemed to care about that at the moment. All of them were staring down into the north stands, at the area devoid of people but filled with battle beasts. The remaining three peak lords from the north bank all had strange looks in their eyes as they stared at one particular beast among the crowd.

It looked like a deer, and was currently howling up into the air under the effects of the Aphrodisiac Pill.

"Before, I assumed that pill's effectiveness was limited to beasts with third order bloodlines.... I never imagined that it would also be effective on second order bloodlines!"

"That pill... would be incredibly useful to us on the north bank!"

The three peak lords from the north bank were trembling in excitement. The old woman among their number then waved her right finger through the air toward the phoenix.

Instantly, the phoenix trembled as a powerful force wrapped around it and dragged it down toward the balcony. At the same time, the battle beasts roared and flew in the same direction.

The old woman snorted coldly and looked down at the beasts, which then began to howl mournfully. Another powerful force swept them up, sending them spinning toward her. As they approached, they shrank down and disappeared into her sleeve.

The old woman looked over at the miserable, shrieking phoenix, eyes shining as she turned to confer with the other peak lords.

Off to the side, Elder Zhou's face had turned green....

Bai Xiaochun seemed no worse for the wear. Heaving a sigh of relief, he was just about to walk off the arena floor when the north bank disciples recovered from the fear of the threat which had been levied against them, and began to roar in anger.

“I’m gonna kill you, Bai Xiaochun!”

“Bai Xiaochun, the north bank will never rest until you’re dead!!”

“Exterminate Bai Xiaochun!!” The north bank disciples had veins bulging out on their necks and faces as they howled in fury. In

response, Bai Xiaochun turned back to look at them, and raised an ordinary medicinal pill up into the air as he stuck his jaw out.

Instantly... the entire crowd trembled and went completely silent.

Bai Xiaochun waved his sleeve and chuckled darkly. Popping the medicinal pill into his mouth, he left the arena floor.... Behind him, the north bank disciples erupted in rage yet again.

# Chapter 95: That's Not How You Use Swords!

---

The disciples of the south bank looked at Bai Xiaochun in admiration, and even began to give voice to their feelings.

“Sect Uncle Bai... is a god!”

“Sect Uncle Bai has become the archenemy of the north bank, a path that cannot be returned from. But how far will he go...?”

Many of them were even rejoicing at the fact that Bai Xiaochun wasn't from the north bank. If he were, it was impossible to imagine how much the south bank would have suffered.

“Sect Uncle Bai is enough for our south bank. He alone can drive the north bank crazy.”

Xu Baocai had already been struck speechless numerous times on this day, but it was only now that he realized... that Bai Xiaochun's power seemed limitless.

Regardless, the atmosphere of the Chosen battles had been completely changed. And yet, the matches would continue. The south bank side was filled with admiration, and the north bank stewed in their madness as the fourth set of matches began.

Shangguan Tianyou, Ghostfang, and Bai Xiaochun all had three

victories to their names, so their presence wasn't even needed to finish the final rankings for the fourth, fifth, and sixth place spots.

The Gongsun siblings and Xu Song took the floor to finish things. In the end, Gongsun Yun defeated Gongsun Wan'er, as well as Xu Song. No more battles were necessary to determine the rankings.

Xu Song was not a match for Gongsun Yun, and even if he fought Gongsun Wan'er and lost, that one battle wouldn't change the final rankings. As such, Xu Song took fifth place.

With five defeats, Gongsun Wan'er lost a bit of glory and took sixth place. Fourth place went to Gongsun Yun.

Next to be determined were the final rankings for the top three disciples! Everyone was watching with keen anticipation to see how Bai Xiaochun, Shangguan Tianyou and Ghostfang would end up in the final standings.

Of course, the north bank disciples glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun the entire time. They approved of Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou, but their opinion of Bai Xiaochun was that he was completely shameless and despicable.

The north bank's hopes all rested on Ghostfang. As far as they were concerned, it wouldn't matter what plots Bai Xiaochun hatched, he was no match for Ghostfang in terms of power, and would be crushed like a twig.

“First battle. Bai Xiaochun versus Shangguan Tianyou!” Apparently due to Bai Xiaochun’s antics, Ouyang Jie’s voice was no longer as cold and sinister as it had been, and in fact, it almost seemed like he was sighing.

Shangguan Tianyou looked up, a powerful gleam in his eye as he thought about how he’d been outdone by Bai Xiaochun in the qualifying round. As he walked out onto the arena floor, the breeze lifted his hair, making him look even more handsome than usual, like a precious sword that would cause countless disciples’ eyes to glitter.

Of course, none of the south bank disciples dared to cheer. After all, Bai Xiaochun was also from the south bank, and had many tricks up his sleeve. They feared that if they cheered for his opponent, he would remember, and hold it against them. Therefore, they had no choice but to bite their tongues.

The north bank, on the other hand, actually did start to cheer for Shangguan Tianyou. In response, Shangguan Tianyou frowned, aware that they weren’t really cheering for him, but against Bai Xiaochun. The north bank would cheer for any opponent of Bai Xiaochun’s, even if it were a pig. The thought left Shangguan Tianyou even more displeased than before.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and walked out onto the arena floor. Looking over at Shangguan Tianyou, he flicked his sleeve and smiled. “Listen, there’s no need for all this. We’re both—”

Before he could finish speaking, however, Shangguan Tianyou’s eyes blazed, and he waved his finger. Instantly, his flying sword

pierced through the air as fast as a bolt of lightning. It moved so quickly that before Bai Xiaochun could even react, it was right there, a few inches in front of his face!

Pupils constricting, mind bursting with a sensation of imminent crisis, he ducked down. A blast of wind from the sword buffeted him from above, and one of his hairs was severed, which then floated down in front of him.

“When cultivators fight, we seize every opportunity,” Shangguan Tianyou said coolly. “Even if you hadn’t avoided that sword, it wouldn’t have killed you. You are naughty and mischievous, and severely lacking in good family values. Since your father and mother didn’t discipline you, I guess I’ll step in to provide you with a bit of education. However, you’d better not use any vile or treacherous methods, and lose face for the south bank.” As he spoke, his flying sword circled back around and came to rest floating in front of him.

The north bank went quiet for a moment, then broke out into cheering. The south bank maintained their silence. None of them seemed very happy with Shangguan Tianyou, and even some of the people who considered themselves his fans were frowning.

After all, the south bank disciples generally didn’t hate Bai Xiaochun. Although he was somewhat naughty and mischievous, it wasn’t excessive. He left them feeling a bit helpless sometimes, but they actually liked him. The north bank hated him, but to the south bank, he represented their hope for glory.

Furthermore, it was obvious to everyone that Bai Xiaochun had

been on the verge of conceding. Clearly, he'd hoped to keep from getting into a fierce fight with Shangguan Tianyou, thus sparing Shangguan Tianyou some spiritual power to use in his final battle with Ghostfang.

Shangguan Tianyou had been aware of that too, and yet had attacked anyway, and in an underhanded way at that. Then he talked about educating Bai Xiaochun, and even dishonored his family. Behavior like that left many south bank disciples quite uncomfortable!

Bai Xiaochun knelt there, watching his hair float down in front of him. Slowly, his smile faded, and he looked up at Shangguan Tianyou, the word "education" ringing in his ears.

"You're a Chosen, so if you want to look down on me, fine. I don't really care what other people think about me anyway." For some reason, something seemed different about Bai Xiaochun all of a sudden.

"You want to use underhanded attacks? That's your business. I practice cultivation so that I can live forever. I don't like fighting and killing." He waved his right hand off to the side, tossing the defensive amulets away. All of a sudden, it seemed as if his veins were filled with, not blood, but steel.

In the south bank audience, Hou Yunfei's eyes glittered, and he couldn't stop himself from shaking. All of a sudden, he was looking at the same Bai Xiaochun who had saved him from the Luo Chen Clan.



“But what gives you the right... to step in for my dad and mom and educate me!?!?” Bai Xiaochun eyes were completely bloodshot. His parents had both passed away when he was young, an event which had influenced him in profound ways. It was one of the biggest reasons why he began to wish to live forever.

He was a generally optimistic person, an attitude he had intentionally fostered since a young age. There had been no other option. He had personally watched his parents die of illness. He remembered sitting with their corpses for days, weeping, refusing to believe that they were gone, even calling their names. Eventually, the corpses began to stink, and relatives came to bury them. Bai Xiaochun had been left in a daze, and at one point even took to talking to himself.... If a child grew up in such a manner, his entire life would be one of darkness.

So Bai Xiaochun replaced the crying with laughter. He began to think about the idea of living forever. He would never forget how his parents had died, and although he missed them, it only made him want to keep living.

He was stubborn and mischievous, but not to an excessive degree. Many of the things he did were even accidents. Deep down, he was a good person.

He feared death, and seemed weak on the outside, but when his friends were in danger, he would fight to the death to protect them. If he needed to, he could bellow in rage and risk his life on the field of battle.

He liked to joke, but was also deeply emotional. Big Fatty Zhang, Li Qinghou, Hou Yunfei, Du Lingfei, Hou Xiaomei, the sect leader, and all the other people who treated him well, were people he would never, ever forget.

“What gives you the right?!” He suddenly burst into action, moving so quickly that he was instantly in front of Shangguan Tianyou. Shangguan Tianyou’s eyes widened, and his hair stood on end, but before he could do a single thing in response, Bai Xiaochun’s fist struck out, glittering with silver light.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as Shangguan Tianyou’s personal shield sprang up, but it was absolutely incapable of providing any defense. Bai Xiaochun’s fist pierced through it like a hammer crushing ice. Just as it was about to land on Shangguan Tianyou, a tiny buckler appeared, which subsequently trembled and was sent flying off to the side. Bai Xiaochun’s fist landed on Shangguan Tianyou’s chest, causing blood to spray out of his mouth. Shangguan Tianyou felt as if a huge force had slammed into him, and he staggered backward ten paces, coughing up more blood, an expression of utter incredulity on his face.

“Are you really Chosen?” Bai Xiaochun asked coolly. He didn’t stick his jaw out. He didn’t put on the air of a lonely hero. But everyone looking at him in that moment felt like they were looking at a blazing sun. Gasps could be heard among the south bank disciples, and the north bank audience was completely stunned.

Ghostfang’s eyes began to shine, and up on the balcony, the sect leader and the others had very serious expression on their faces.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Shangguan Tianyou growled. Feeling completely humiliated, he roared and performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Five flying swords appeared, all of which emanated terrifying sword qi. Taking control of them with his spirit sword body, Shangguan Tianyou sent them flying toward Bai Xiaochun.

Rumbling could be heard as the swords blurred into motion, becoming five sword dragons, each one of them about two meters wide and thirty meters long. As they arced through the air, everything shook, and even the surface of the arena floor began to crumble. Based on the shocking level of energy they displayed, any one of the swords would be able to kill an ordinary disciple. Two would definitely take out other elite disciples. As for Chosen like Gongsun Yun, three would be enough to force him to concede. But now five appeared, filling the entire arena floor with a shocking sword aura.

“I don’t know anything about sword techniques,” Bai Xiaochun said coolly. “Nor do I have a sword spirit body. But from what I know... that’s not how you use swords!” With that, he waved his finger, and the Golden Crow Sword appeared, a golden beam of light that slashed toward the first of Shangguan Tianyou’s swords!

I don’t care if you use three swords or five, I only need one!

That one sword caused the sky to shake, and became an explosive stream of sword qi!

That one sword used Heaviness-in-Lightness and Lightness-in-Heaviness!

That one sword was backed by the perfect amount of spiritual power, without the slightest bit of wastage!

It was true that Bai Xiaochun didn't really know anything about sword techniques. But he knew the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, Heaviness-in-Lightness, and Lightness-in-Heaviness. He knew that, although a leaf could not be used to lift a log, if you rolled it up, it could lift a small rock. Furthermore, if you tore the leaf into strips and wove them together, it could lift an even heavier rock!

He knew the proper way to manipulate spiritual power!

Sometimes, mastering one technique was superior to knowing tens of thousands of them. In the Qi Condensation stage... his skill combined with his Undying Silver Skin made him invincible!

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

An ear-splitting explosion rocked the entire area, and countless chunks of rubble were thrown into the air. Bai Xiaochun's single sword strike became a tempest that slammed into Shangguan Tianyou's five sword dragons. The sword dragons twisted and distorted, and then exploded into countless fragments. Then the blast of wind continued on, slamming directly into Shangguan Tianyou's face.

Bai Xiaochun stood there, his hair whipping in the wind, his expression placid. He didn't clasp his hands behind his back, and didn't flick his sleeve. He simply stood there, as calm as ice. It was

a scene that would forever be etched into the minds of all disciples of the north and south banks.

“Is that really... Bai Xiaochun?” Everyone felt as if their minds were about to explode.

## Chapter 96: Fighting Ghostfang

---

The south bank was shaken. All of the disciples who actually knew Bai Xiaochun felt like they suddenly didn't recognize the person standing there in front of them. He seemed like a stranger. The Bai Xiaochun they remembered loved to make people call him Sect Uncle Bai. He was a somewhat annoying person who made everyone feel like giving him a good beating. This person was completely different.

Gasps could be heard coming from the north bank audience. The disciples there stared blankly, and their minds spun. Although they hadn't known Bai Xiaochun for very long, he had already given them the impression that he was completely shameless. In sharp contrast, the person they were looking at now left them shaken to the core.

Up on the balcony, Zheng Yuandong's eyes shone with an extraordinary gleam. The other peak lords had very serious expressions on their faces, and Li Qinghou looked on with a slight smile. A warm feeling filled his heart, along with a sensation of pride.

All the other elders were also looking on with serious looks in their eyes.

Shangguan Tianyou flew through the air a bit above the arena floor, coughing up blood, a blank look in his eyes. He couldn't believe that he was losing, and of all people, to Bai Xiaochun, whom he held in complete contempt. He had been injured, but the humiliation he felt exceeded the pain of his wounds. Just as he was

about to fly off of the arena floor, he let out a powerful shout.

“This battle isn’t over yet, Bai Xiaochun!” With that, he bit his tongue and spit out a mouthful of blood. His hair instantly withered, and at the same time, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture. A moment later, he trembled as a blood-colored light shot out from the top of his head!

The light surged up high above him, where it transformed into a blood sword!

Numerous disciples in the audience instantly recognized what they were looking at. “One of the ten secret magics! True Self Sword!”

“Hellfiend Formation!” Shangguan Tianyou’s hands blurred as he performed another incantation gesture, then waved his finger toward Bai Xiaochun. Instantly, the blood sword transformed into countless strands of blood that swirled out to become a net of swords, which then shot toward Bai Xiaochun with an ear-piercing whistling sound.

Bai Xiaochun simply extended his right hand and pointed out with his index finger.

Up ahead of him, the air distorted as an enormous cauldron appeared. Although it was illusory, it seemed close to being corporeal. The complex designs which covered its surface were clearly visible, making seem very realistic.

“Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning!? Heavens!”

“It’s so realistic! That’s not an ordinary Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning, that’s the second level!” Cries of astonishment could be heard coming from the south bank audience, especially the disciples from Violet Cauldron Peak.

Gasps could also be heard from the north bank audience as the violet cauldron and the blood-colored sword formation slammed into each other, causing a deafening boom to fill the air. Shangguan Tianyou let out a miserable shriek as he was sent spinning backward, blood spraying out of his mouth.

Bai Xiaochun’s expression was the same as ever as he stood there on the arena floor, watching the enormous cauldron fade away. At the same time, Ghostfang’s eyes suddenly began to gleam, and without another word, he flew over to stand across from Bai Xiaochun.

“Shangguan Tianyou is too weak to fight any longer,” he said. “Let’s make things simple... and fight right now!” Even as the words left his mouth, black mist began to pulse out around him, swirling into the form of numerous vicious ghosts who let out soundless shrieks.

The ghosts were completely vicious in appearance. Some had disheveled hair, some had green skin, and some looked like rotting corpses. There were even some that carried their own heads in their arms. They were terrifying to the extreme.



The entire arena floor began to fill with an aura of death, causing hearts to grow cold among the disciples of both banks.

As that happened, numerous figures flew out of the crowd on both sides, people with very serious expressions on their faces. They weren't Outer Sect disciples, but rather, Inner Sect disciples from both the south and north banks who were extremely interested in the final match of the Chosen battles!

Even the divine sense of the prime elders atop Mount Daoseed was completely focused on the arena floor.

All eyes were glued on Bai Xiaochun and Ghostfang!

Bai Xiaochun slowly turned to face Ghostfang, his expression serious. He had seen Ghostfang fight several times during the Chosen battles, and each time had been astonishing. A single wave of his finger had almost killed Lu Tianlei, and that had been only seventy percent of his power.

It was hard to imagine what it would be like if he unleashed all of his battle prowess.

In the moment that Bai Xiaochun looked over at Ghostfang, Ghostfang's eyes flickered with a mysterious light. Then he waved his finger at Bai Xiaochun, causing rumbling sounds to fill heaven and earth. A gigantic ghost claw appeared next to Ghostfang, filling half of the arena floor. Surging with astonishing levels of power, it rocketed toward Bai Xiaochun.

In the blink of an eye, it was upon him. Bai Xiaochun clenched his right hand into a fist, and silver light flashed, making him look like a silver statue. Then he struck out toward the incoming ghost claw.

From a distance, Bai Xiaochun's slight frame seemed completely insignificant compared to the shocking ghost claw. And yet, as soon as his fist made contact with it, an ear-splitting blast exploded out.

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

The thunderous explosion caused disciples on both sides of the arena to tumble backward, astonished expressions on their faces. Some of them even saw stars swimming in their eyes.

As the shockwave spread out from the contact point, the ghost claw trembled. Cracking sounds rang out, and fissures spread out to fill its entire surface. One breath of time passed, and then the gigantic ghost claw shattered into countless pieces.

Black mist exploded out in all directions, and the entire arena floor shook violently. Ghostfang's eyes shone brightly as he fell back a single pace before slamming his foot down to stop himself.

Cracks spread out in the ground from the foot he stomped down. As for Bai Xiaochun, he also fell back a single pace, his face flushed, his hand glittering with silver light. If you looked closely at that hand, it was possible to see it trembling slightly.

The surrounding disciples gasped, and both sides of the arena immediately burst forth with cries of shock and astonishment.

“I can’t believe... Bai Xiaochun is... so strong!!”

“He’s actually at the same level as Elder Brother Ghostfang! Back when the Luochen Clan turned traitor, I heard that he barely escaped with his life, but killed a bunch of them in the process. I thought those stories were exaggerations, but now....”

“That’s the first time I’ve ever seen anyone destroy Ghostfang’s ghost claw!”

The Inner Sect disciples were equally astonished, and all of them felt their hearts pounding with bitter astonishment as they looked at Bai Xiaochun and Ghostfang. As far as they were concerned, these two weren’t even Outer Sect disciples any more. Oftentimes, years would pass without a single inhuman disciple rising up from within the ranks. And yet now... two had appeared at the same time.

Up on the balcony, the sect leader’s eyes shone with joy, and the other elders’ eyebrows were raised in shock.

Bai Xiaochun frowned at the tingling sensation he felt in his hand, but the feeling soon went away. Looking over at Ghostfang, he realized that he was facing a formidable opponent.

Ghostfang’s eyes shone with what appeared to be happiness. “I

only used fifty percent power, but you still destroyed my finger attack. That means you're a lot stronger than anyone else I've faced. Well, in that case... I can safely use eighty percent power."

Right hand flashing with an incantation gesture, he waved his finger again at Bai Xiaochun.

Instantly, black mist swirled into being above Bai Xiaochun. The air was ripped apart as, unexpectedly, another huge ghost claw appeared.

This one was even more massive than the one which had nearly killed Lu Tianlei, and caused rumbling sounds to echo out in all directions as it descended toward Bai Xiaochun like a mountain.

Bai Xiaochun looked up, clenched his right hand into a fist, and then launched into the air, turning into a bright beam of light that shot directly toward the ghost claw.

Silver light spread out in all directions as the power of his fist caused heaven and earth to shake. Bai Xiaochun's Undying Skin erupted with power, causing the ghost claw to tremble, and then begin to break apart just like the previous one!

Ghostfang's face flickered as he performed more incantation gestures, sending a third, a fourth, and a fifth finger attack out in quick succession.

In the blink of an eye, Bai Xiaochun was facing four enormous

ghost claws.

Although all of this takes some time to describe, it happened in the briefest of instants. As the four ghost claws bore down on Bai Xiaochun, the Outer Sect disciples cried out in alarm, and even the Inner Sect disciples were left completely shaken.

On the balcony, the sect leader and the others shot to their feet, and Li Qinghou's eyes glittered. However, a moment later, they all realized that there was no need to intervene and rescue Bai Xiaochun.

In the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, a huge boom echoed out as the ghost claws all landed on Bai Xiaochun, and the arena floor was reduced to nothing more than dust. The resultant cloud of dust that filled the air obscured Bai Xiaochun.

However, a moment later, a flicker like that of lightning could be seen in the dust as a figure shot out at top speed toward Ghostfang.

“Throat Crushing Grasp!” The only thing that could be seen was flickering, silver light. Then, two fingers appeared directly in front of Ghostfang, filling him with an intense sensation of deadly crisis, the likes of which he had never felt before. He let out a hoarse shout, causing mist to surge up around him in the form of a defensive shield. At the same time, he fell back in retreat.

However, at that very moment, a powerful gravitational force erupted from Bai Xiaochun's two fingers. Not only was Ghostfang prevented from retreating, he was actually pulled toward the

fingers.

When his defensive shield made contact with the fingers, it was crushed in the briefest of moments. None of his subsequent defensive measures did anything, not even the three bucklers he summoned. The first was instantly shattered, the second cracked into two pieces, and the third, despite remaining whole, was sent spinning away.

None of them could stop Bai Xiaochun!

The two fingers crushed anything in their path as easily as a hammer destroying ice. Ghostfang let out a miserable shriek, and shockingly, more than thirty percent of his hair turned white as he paid a shocking price to suddenly become transparent and disappear! Bai Xiaochun's two fingers passed directly through him, clasp down onto nothing but air.

A boom rang out as the air was crushed and shattered. A moment later, Ghostfang appeared some distance away from Bai Xiaochun, coughing up blood, his face wrinkled as if with age.

Panting, he said, "You forced me to use one of my life-saving magics, Bai Xiaochun.... I underestimated you!"

Instead of retreating, he actually seemed like he wanted to continue fighting. However, he was unsure of what divine ability had just been used against him, something that seemed to vastly exceed the battle prowess of the Qi Condensation stage.

Blood oozed out of the corners of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he stood there, wok cracked, skin covered with lacerations; even his aura was in chaos.

He had managed to stand up to five of the ghost claws, but it had been very difficult. Without his Undying Skin being at the silver level, he would surely have been defeated.

Sadly, his last powerful attack had been avoided.

# Chapter 97: I Am Big Fatty Zhang!

---

As of this moment, all of the disciples in the audience were staring blankly at the arena floor, their minds spinning, tsunamis of shock battering their hearts.

The south bank audience were thunderstruck. It was only in this moment that they finally realized why it was that Bai Xiaochun had managed to survive his fight with the Luo Chen Clan, and why he had been named a Prestige disciple!

“He’s actually... so strong!!” That was what all of the shocked disciples were thinking.

As for the north bank audience, their minds were in shambles.

Up on the balcony, the various elders all had bright gleams in their eyes as they mentally replayed the moment in which Bai Xiaochun struck that incredible blow, and the silver light which covered him.

“That’s the Undying Live Forever Technique! He’s reached the silver level!”

“That final blow was... the Throat Crushing Grasp!”

“I can’t believe that someone actually succeeded in cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique! It’s virtually impossible! It’s an extraordinary technique, but sadly, its origins are a complete



mystery, and furthermore, our version is incomplete....”

“I very much look forward to seeing if one of these two end up in the Legacy Echelon years from now!” The sect leader sighed. Such an event would only come after many years had passed. Reaching the Legacy Echelon was a very, very difficult matter. Even the mere thought of it caused him to look over at Li Qinghou. “Reach the Gold Core stage within two sixty-year-cycles, and that puts you in the Legacy Echelon,” he thought. “Our only hope for this generation... is Li Qinghou.”

Back on the arena floor, Ghostfang waved his hand, causing a green light to flow out, which transformed into an enormous greenwood banner, which he stuck into the ground next to him.

Then he sat down cross-legged, his eyes shining with the desire to fight.

“Bai Xiaochun, you are worthy. I will now open my seals!

“First level seal, open!” With that, his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he pushed his finger down onto his forehead. A droning sound could be heard, and he trembled visibly as numerous streams of black light exploded out from inside of him. As they swirled around, he grew slightly larger, and a powerful aura erupted out, an aura which reached well into the Foundation Establishment stage.

“Sixth finger! Seventh! Eighth! Ninth! Tenth!”

Roaring, he waved his finger at Bai Xiaochun five times in a row, each time unleashing greater power than before. Heaven and earth trembled as five gigantic ghost hands began to descend from above, radiating shocking levels of energy.

Gasps could be heard from the audience.

“Is that... still a Qi Condensation magical technique? It looks like something from Foundation Establishment!!”

“This is the first time I’ve seen a Qi Condensation disciple unleash magic as shocking as that!”

“Only some type of secret magic could do such a thing! All secret magics in the Spirit Stream Sect can be used to some extent in the Qi Condensation stage!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s pupils constricted. The pressure he felt from Ghostfang now felt even greater than before, and even beyond what he had faced in his fight with the crown prince of the Luochen Clan.

Of course, this was not a battle to the death. Back in his fight with the Luochen Clan... his life had been on the line!

Although he wasn’t fighting for his life right now, he still didn’t want to lose. If there was no chance for him to take first place, then he wouldn’t even try, but now that first place was in sight... he wanted it!

Not for the supposed reputation it would earn him, but because of the approval he knew he would see in Li Qinghou's eyes.

That was enough of a reason for him!

Eyes bloodshot, he waved his sleeve and performed an incantation gesture. Spiritual power surged within him, and a violet cauldron appeared. Then a second, a third... until five cauldrons hovered around him!

In the blink of an eye, five violet cauldrons materialized and shot toward the five clawed ghost hands. Simultaneously, the Golden Crow Sword appeared in a streak of golden light, summoning the golden crow, which let out a piercing cry as it shot toward Ghostfang!

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun shot forward, ignoring the ghost hands as he closed in on Ghostfang himself.

A boom rang out as the five violet cauldrons slammed into the five ghost hands. The cauldrons shattered. As for the clawed ghost hands, they faded a bit, but continued to close in on Bai Xiaochun at top speed. Then rumbling could be heard as the Divine Crane Shield appeared, and an enormous crane materialized around Bai Xiaochun.

When the ghost hands slammed into it, cracking sounds could be heard as they faded even more. The crane let out a piercing shriek, vanishing and returning to the shield itself, incapable of providing

any further defense.

The five ghost hands proceeded unhindered to slam into Bai Xiaochun. However, just before they touched him, black light spread out and covered him, the result of the life-saving magic given to him by Li Qinghou.

When the clawed ghost hands hit the black light, they couldn't stand up to its power. Deafening booms rang out as they were destroyed. Bai Xiaochun coughed up a mouthful of blood, and yet, suffered no other injuries. The black light faded, and Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered as he closed in on Ghostfang with the Golden Crow Sword. By this point, he was a mere fifteen meters away, and the Golden Crow Sword was only three meters from Ghostfang.

Ghostfang's face flickered as he grabbed his greenwood banner and leaped backward. The Golden Crow Sword sped past his shoulder, slicing a wound open as it passed. Blood sprayed out, but Ghostfang ignored the pain. Hair disheveled and eyes bloodshot, he waved the banner and said, "Second level seal, open! Ten Ghosts... Haunt the Night!"

Terrifying howling noises rose up from the greenwood banner as two scaled ghost arms ripped the banner open. Out stepped a vicious green ghost with a long horn sticking out of its head and a ferocious grin on its face.

The sky suddenly darkened as sinister black clouds roiled into existence, almost as if night had fallen.

More vicious ghosts emerged from within the banner, a total of ten. Each one was bursting with energy equivalent to the great circle of Qi Condensation. As they began to charge Bai Xiaochun, his face flickered, and his heart began to pound. Even if he were stronger than his current level, there was no way he could fight ten ghosts who had battle prowess equivalent to the great circle of Qi Condensation.

Ghostfang breathed a sigh of relief. He couldn't keep his second seal open for too long, and knew that all of his hopes for victory rested with these ten ghosts.

He stood there behind them, eying Bai Xiaochun coldly.

The battle between these two had been like a fight between a dragon and a tiger, and provoked cries of alarm and surprise from the audience. Now everyone could see exactly how powerful Ghostfang was, and the north bank audience was in high spirits. As for the south bank disciples, they were starting to get very nervous.

Bai Xiaochun was in full retreat as the ten ghosts spread out to surround him. Their cultivation bases were shocking, so powerful that not even the Golden Crow Sword could defend against them.

“Ten Ghosts Haunt the Night....” Suddenly, he looked up into the sky at the black clouds that made everything seem like night. Eyes flickering thoughtfully, his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and the Golden Crow Sword shot up toward the clouds.

Apparently, Bai Xiaochun wanted to slash the clouds open so that the arena floor was no longer covered in night.

Ghostfang frowned slightly in response to Bai Xiaochun's quick reaction. The best time to use this divine ability of his was at night, when it was virtually invincible. During the daytime, it was definitely possible to break it... unless he unleashed the Hundred Ghosts level.

“That cloud cover is beyond ordinary,” Ghostfang thought with a cold smile. “Only spirit enhanced treasures could possibly break it. Even if Bai Xiaochun finds a weakness, he's definitely not strong enough to pierce it open!”

It was at that point that the Golden Crow Sword pierced into the clouds, and rumbling echoed out. The clouds seemed to weaken, but strangely, sucked in the Golden Crow Sword, making it impossible to use again.

Getting nervous, Bai Xiaochun fell back again and pulled out two spirit enhanced flying swords. After sending them shooting up, they were also sucked into the clouds, although the clouds weakened further in the process.

Ghostfang's jaw dropped. “Spirit enhanced treasures...?”

Next, before Ghostfang could even react, Bai Xiaochun suddenly produced eight more flying swords, all of which glittered with silver light as they shot up into the sky. Each and every one had a twofold spirit enhancement, and when they pierced into the cloud

cover, it was weakened so much that rays of sunlight began to shine down, which caused the ten ghosts to shriek and dodge to the side.

Ghostfang's eyes went wide, and despite his level of willpower, couldn't help but let out a cry of shock. "S-so... so many!! Dammit, he can't have more than that, can he?!"

He wasn't the only person to react in such a way. The Outer Sect disciples from both the south and north banks all looked on with disbelieving eyes, and began to shout aloud.

"Heavens! How many spirit enhanced items does Bai Xiaochun have?!"

"Most disciples have trouble getting their hands on a single one. But he... has so many? Who enhanced them for him!?"

As people shouted out in surprise, Big Fatty Zhang was there in the crowd. However, he was more toward the back, and although he had been cheering for Bai Xiaochun, nobody had really paid any attention to him.

Now that he saw Bai Xiaochun using all of the flying swords, he lifted his chin loftily and said, "All of them were enhanced by me, Big Fatty Zhang!"

Even as Ghostfang tried to convince himself that Bai Xiaochun couldn't possibly have any more spirit enhanced items, Bai

Xiaochun was delighted to discover that his swords were actually affecting the cloud cover. Immediately, he began to laugh out loud, and then produced two more flying swords. Silver light flashed as the spirit enhanced swords shot toward the clouds.

“Impossible!!” Ghostfang shouted in shock.

Rumbling sounds emanated from the clouds, which could not stand up to so many attacks by spirit enhanced swords. As sunlight spilled down, the ten ghosts screamed shrilly as they retreated back into the banner.

As that happened, Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily and began to close in on Ghostfang, building up power to unleash the Throat Crushing Grasp again.

An extremely unsightly expression appeared on Ghostfang’s face. Just as he was about to fight back, blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he trembled. The side-effects of opening his second seal were now beginning to affect him. An unyielding expression on his face, he began to fall back as fast as possible.

“I concede!” he said through gritted teeth. He knew that in his current state, he wasn’t a match for Bai Xiaochun. Even still, he refused to acknowledge that he had truly been defeated. If Bai Xiaochun hadn’t possessed so many spirit enhanced treasures, he would never have been able to defeat Ghosts Haunt the Night.

Furthermore, if they had actually been fighting at night, he would have been defeated even more handily.



In the moment that Ghostfang conceded, the shocked disciples of the south bank immediately broke out into excited cheering.

“We won! The south bank won!!”

“Hahaha! We took first place! We got two people into the top three!!”

“We’ve gotten our revenge! Sect Uncle Bai is invincible!!” The south bank disciples were cheering up a storm, while the north bank disciples looked on bitterly. They could all see that the problem wasn’t Ghostfang being weak, it was Bai Xiaochun... having too many treasures.

“How come you have so many spirit enhanced treasures, Bai Xiaochun!?” Ghostfang asked, wanting to know why he had been defeated in such a way.

“My Elder Brother Big Fatty Zhang is a spirit enhancement genius,” Bai Xiaochun responded proudly. “The kind you only see once in a thousand... no, once in ten thousand years! All of those treasures I used were gifts from him. If you want to assign blame, blame the fact that my Elder Brother is a genius of spirit enhancement.” The south bank disciples cried out in shock, with the commotion being especially loud among the Violet Cauldron Peak disciples.

“Big Fatty Zhang? Who is this god-like individual?”

“Big Fatty Zhang. He’s... he’s a Violet Cauldron Peak disciple!”

“He’s the apprentice of the peak lord.... Heavens, he usually keeps such a low profile. Who could ever have guessed that he was so incredible!?!?”

Excited, Big Fatty Zhang threw his head back and roared at the top of his lungs, “I am Big Fatty Zhang!! All of the flying swords used by Bai Xiaochun were enhanced by me!!”

Big Fatty Zhang’s excited words echoed out for everyone to hear. Even the sect leader and the others on the balcony turned to look at him curiously.

As pandemonium continued to grip the crowd, Bai Xiaochun stood there blinking. Finally, he lifted his chin and waved his sleeve, looking like the ultimate hero. Turning slowly, he walked off of the arena floor.

“Ai. Life is a lonely thing. With the snap of a finger, I reduced all the Chosen to ashes ....”

# Chapter 98: Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture

---

The Chosen battles... had caused many eyes to be focused on Big Fatty Zhang, even those of the sect leader.

“The power of will!!” he said, expression very serious. The other peak lords looked surprised, and their eyes began to shine.

Xu Meixiang had taken Lu Tianlei away to begin treating his injuries, but if she were present, she would have been incredulous.

Sounding very happy, the sect leader said, “Junior Sister Meixiang rarely takes this chubby kid out in public. But now his future prospects are clear. His spirit enhancement has developed his will. With a strong will and a strong spirit, this kid is the kind that must be trained well!”

The peak lord from Green Crest Peak smiled and said, “Now that you mention it, his friend, that girl who also came from the Ovens, Qingrou, is actually quite impressive. She might not measure up to Tianyou, but she has her own special destiny. She seems connected to Green Crest Peak’s mountain defense sword. She’s currently seeking enlightenment in Green Crest Cave, and if things go well, Green Crest Peak will soon have another spirit sword guardian!”

As the south bank audience went wild, the north bank disciples simply sat there silently while the sect leader formally announced the results.

Bai Xiaochun had taken first place in the joint south and north bank Chosen battles! He would now join the Inner Sect!

As a reward, he could visit Heavenhorn Pavilion on Mount Daoseed to select a precious treasure of the Qi Condensation level!

Furthermore, he would be given the chance to enter the Spirit Stream Sect's arcane pocket realm, where he could gain enlightenment of a divine ability! Of course, to take advantage of such an opportunity in the Qi Condensation stage would be a bit of a waste. Any disciple who took first place in the Chosen battles would almost certainly reach Foundation Establishment. That would be the time to use such a chance.

The final reward was a prize of 10,000 spirit stones!

Next, Zheng Yuandong formally bestowed the top ten disciples with the title of Chosen, and promoted them into the Inner Sect. Gradually, the crowds began to depart.

The north bank disciples weren't very happy, but the south bank disciples were bursting with excitement. As for the Chosen, they had mixed expressions on their faces. Ghostfang watched Bai Xiaochun walk off, and sighed. Deep in his heart, he still didn't believe himself to have truly lost.

As for the other north bank Chosen such as the Gongsun siblings and Xu Song, they left with clenched fists, all of them intent on returning to their respective mountain peaks and going into

secluded meditation!

Zhou Xinqi still had a hard time believing what she had seen, and looked a bit puzzled as she watched Bai Xiaochun leaving. Even more incredulous than her was Shangguan Tianyou.

He stood there despondently, ignored by virtually everyone. His underhanded attack on Bai Xiaochun was something that would forever be etched into the hearts of the south bank disciples.

Chuckling bitterly, he clenched his hands into fists.

“We’re only in Qi Condensation. Just wait until Foundation Establishment.... I’ll definitely be number one in that stage. I’ll outdo Bai Xiaochun and Ghostfang both!” Filled with determination, he held his head high with pride as he shot off in a beam of light.

Gradually, everyone left the arena. The Chosen battles were over. However, the true fight between all the Chosen had only just begun.

Everyone on both the south and north bank knew Bai Xiaochun’s name, although on the north bank, it became a taboo word!

He was the archenemy of the north bank, a shameless villain who had brought humiliation to all the disciples there!

That was especially true of Beihan Lie. After being taken away by

his master, he immediately went into secluded meditation, not daring to show his face in public. As for his huge dog, he released it somewhere on the north bank, relinquishing ownership of it for all time.

Although the Nightstalker Beast was extraordinary, nobody could control it, and soon it became like a wild dog. Occasionally, people would catch glimpses of it roaming around near the four mountain peaks of the north bank....

Countless north bank disciples went back and madly devoted themselves to cultivation. All of them swore oaths that one day, they would take the stain of humiliation inflicted by Bai Xiaochun and wash it clean with blood!

The disciples even formed an organization called the Slay Xiaochun Society, which was devoted to eradicating Bai Xiaochun!

Because of what had occurred in the Chosen battles, Big Fatty Zhang became incredibly famous. Everyone was completely shocked by the sheer number of spirit enhanced treasures of his that Bai Xiaochun had used in his final fight with Ghostfang.

Big Fatty Zhang became a Chosen on Violet Cauldron Peak, and soon, countless disciples began to visit him, hoping to become friends and thus have access to spirit enhanced items.

Big Fatty Zhang was very pleased by this, but didn't let it show. He wouldn't perform spirit enhancements for just anyone. Of course, the more he acted like that, the more people fawned over

him. Eventually Xu Meixiang called him over to make a detailed inquiry. She almost couldn't believe what she heard, and was even more shocked to sense the power of will within him!

In the end, she forbade him from performing spirit enhancements for anyone else, at least not until he could perform a fivefold spirit enhancement for Bai Xiaochun.

Big Fatty Zhang found that a bit odd, but nodded in agreement nonetheless.

"Spirit enhancement is the most mysterious of arts," she thought. "Perhaps Bai Xiaochun and Big Fatty Zhang have some special connection.... If they help each other, the results could be shocking." Xu Meixiang watched thoughtfully as Big Fatty Zhang left. She didn't look into the matter any further. In the Spirit Stream Sect, everyone had their own destiny, and greedily attempting to take advantage of others could harm the foundation of the sect. Such actions were strictly forbidden. Besides, Bai Xiaochun had a unique status that made him especially difficult to deal with.

The Spirit Stream Sect had remained strong for ten thousand years, and one of the reasons was that hard and fast rule.

A few days later, Bai Xiaochun got his Inner Sect uniform and command medallion. Furthermore, he received orders from Elder Xu, who led the Inner Sect on Fragrant Cloud Peak, to pack his bags and leave the courtyard residence that had been his home for the past few years.

Inner Sect disciples all received immortal's caves filled with strong spiritual energy!

The so-called immortal's caves were like heavenly abodes that were worlds unto their own. Having taken first place in the Chosen battles, Bai Xiaochun had his pick of the available immortal's caves, and naturally, he picked the best one. It was on the rear side of Fragrant Cloud Peak, at the end of a narrow little path, a quiet place filled with strong spiritual energy.

The cave itself had five rooms, with nightpearls inlaid in the ceilings that filled the place with soft light. There was a large main hall with a little hot spring in the middle. Warm water bubbled up, forming a small pond, within which a few hot spring fish swam lazily about.

The immortal's cave was simple but impressive. It had a medicine concocting workshop, secluded meditation facilities, a spirit plant nursery, and a place set aside for practicing magics.

Also included were two puppets with cultivation bases equivalent to the fifth level of Qi Condensation, who cared for day-to-day affairs for Bai Xiaochun. Every room in the immortal's cave had a spell formation, as did the main hall. Once activated, the stone walls and ceilings would vanish to reveal an image of the sky above. At night, it was even possible to see the moon and the stars. There was a larger spell formation that covered the entire immortal's cave, and once activated, not even an early Foundation Establishment cultivator would be able to break in.



This immortal's cave would even be suitable for a Foundation Establishment cultivator, and in fact, it was one of the nicest in all of Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Bai Xiaochun looked very pleased, and his heart nearly burst with joy. Now that he thought about it, his previous courtyard residence had been far too simple and crude. As he saw Elder Xu off, Elder Xu repeatedly reminded him to go to the Inner Sect Spirit Pavilion to find the technique Li Qinghou had suggested for him. Finally, Elder Xu left.

After he was sure Elder Xu was gone, Bai Xiaochun stripped naked and jumped into the pond, where he floated there, sighing contentedly. Occasionally a fish would float by and nibble a bit on his skin. It was a feeling the likes of which he had never experienced before in his life.

“It's too bad Du Lingfei isn't here in the sect. Having her here to bathe with would be great.” Sighing, he thought of Hou Xiaomei, and then smiled radiantly. As of that moment, he vowed to find an opportunity to get her to come over and join him in the hot spring to look at the stars.

After some deep thought, he came to the conclusion that his previous way of thinking had been far too limited. “As a man of ambition, I should get Hou Xiaomei and Du Lingfei to come join me in the hot spring at the same time.”

The next morning, Bai Xiaochun woke early and left his immortal's cave. Strolling along the little mountain path, he noticed another immortal's cave not too far off.

It was only a few meters away, located almost directly across from his own. It had its spell formation activated, and appeared to be occupied. Bai Xiaochun studied it curiously for a few minutes before looking away.

As he strolled along, he realized that there weren't any Outer Sect disciples to be seen, only a few Inner Sect disciples.

Most people weren't out and about, but rather, secluded in meditation. The only time they would come out would be to go on sect missions. Of course, whenever Bai Xiaochun did see someone, he would clear his throat and strike a pose. After looking shocked for a moment, the Inner Sect disciple would inevitably greet him as Sect Uncle Bai.

Being addressed in such a manner as he went along lifted his spirits. He swaggered along through Fragrant Cloud Peak until he reached the Inner Sect's Spirit Pavilion. That was a location where the Inner Sect disciples practiced their various techniques and abilities.

Whenever a disciple was promoted to the Inner Sect, they would be able to acquire one of the sect's techniques at no cost. As soon as Bai Xiaochun arrived, the disciple in charge clasped hands in greeting. Feeling more pleased than ever, Bai Xiaochun clapped his shoulder and then went to look at the options he had in terms of techniques.

“Sever Heaven and Earth?

“Waterflame Theorem!

“Nine Heavens Earth Destruction Incantation?”

After examining the options available, the techniques started to blur together, and he had no idea which one he should pick. They all seemed incredible. Eventually, he found the technique Li Qinghou had suggested that he cultivate.

“Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture?” He picked up the jade slip and sent some spiritual power into it. After examining the introduction, his eyes went wide, and his scalp began to tingle.

“Everyone is bound by shackles. Whether in terms of cultivation base or the fleshly body, there are life essence shackles which cannot be broken.... I have created this technique, suitable for cultivation in the Qi Condensation stage, not to break through the shackles, but to gain enlightenment of them!”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and thought back to the black-robed man who had saved his life, the one who called himself the gravekeeper. The words in the introduction of this scripture reminded him of the words that man had spoken.

“The five volumes of the Undying Codex. Break through the five shackles of mortality. The five volumes of the Live Forever Codex. Break through the five seals of eternity!”

He suddenly had the feeling that this Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture was anything but ordinary. However, after further examination, he frowned. Based on the description, there didn't seem to be anything particularly astonishing about it. In fact, it didn't even seem to measure up to some of the other powerful magical techniques he'd just looked at. After a moment though, his expression brightened as he realized that it dovetailed perfectly with the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, and also increased the chances of reaching Foundation Establishment!

Bai Xiaochun had been dreaming of reaching Foundation Establishment for years now, and merely thinking about it would leave his heart pounding.

The Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture only had three levels. The first led to the ninth level of Qi Condensation, the second led to the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation. The final level led to... Foundation Establishment!

At the pinnacle, the fleshly body would have the strength of dragons and mammoths, and one's spiritual power would form a huge sea. Best of all was that after creating such a matchless foundation, once one reached Foundation Establishment, it would be much easier to learn just about any divine ability, without worrying about an incompatibility problem.

It was something extraordinary within the ordinary!

"This is the one for me!" Whether because of the fact that the introduction mentioned shackles, or that the scripture could help him reach Foundation Establishment, it left Bai Xiaochun's heart

pounding. Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture in hand, he left the Inner Sect Spirit Pavilion and headed back toward his immortal's cave.

Just when he was almost there, the gate of the immortal's cave across from him opened, and a young woman walked out. As soon as she saw him, her jaw dropped, and she tried to duck back inside, but wasn't fast enough.

“Eee? Sect Niece Xinqi!” He was immediately elated. Ever since the Chosen battles, Zhou Xinqi had kept her distance from him. He'd wanted to get her to address him as Sect Uncle, but had never found the chance. Who would have thought that he was now living right across from her!

# Chapter 99: Knock Knock

---

An unsightly expression appeared on Zhou Xinqi's face. Never had she imagined that she would pick the immortal's cave right across from Bai Xiaochun's. She was well aware that back in the Outer Sect, Bai Xiaochun had loved to go around making everyone call him Sect Uncle. Unable to stomach the thought, she'd always avoided him.

But now here he was, standing right in her path.

Taking a deep breath, she coolly said, "Sect... Sect Uncle Bai!" Then, without so much as looking at him, she leapt onto her blue flying silk and flew up into the air. Her beauty made her seem almost like a female immortal, and so she often flew around in this fashion to avoid the toadies and sycophants. It was because such behavior that she seemed relatively distant and unapproachable.

Bai Xiaochun happily tucked his hands behind his back like a member of the senior generation as he watched Zhou Xinqi fly away. He didn't mind her attitude; all he wanted was to be called Sect Uncle Bai.

After she left, he returned to his own immortal's cave, feeling very much like he had reached a milestone on this day. Back inside, he pulled out the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture and began to take a closer look. As he did, he thought back to how powerful Ghostfang had been in their fight, and suddenly his expression turned very serious.

“How does Ghostfang practice cultivation anyway? He’s so incredible.... Especially those ghosts of his. He controls them almost like battle beasts. It sure would be great if I could have a beast of my own.” Thinking back to the fight, the lingering fear caused his heart to tremble. Suddenly, he remembered something, and slapped his bag of holding to produce a wooden box.

“The Beastbirth Seed.... If I ever have a chance to go to the north bank, then maybe... I could get a beast of my very own. Furthermore, such a beast would have been created by me and me alone!” After thinking about the miraculous Beastbirth Seed, his heart began to pound in excitement. A long moment passed, and then he shook his head. Suppressing his excitement, he put the box away.

“I hate fighting and killing more than anything else. I need to focus on getting to the great circle of Qi Condensation as soon as possible. That way I can step into Foundation Establishment.” With those thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun set to work cultivating the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture.

Although the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture could be used to perfect the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, their cultivation techniques were completely different. Instead of depicting various postures to assume, the description in the scripture had three illustrations. The first depicted an enormous, primeval mammoth. It seemed preeminently powerful, strong enough to crush a mountain. The idea of such incredible fleshly body power left Bai Xiaochun immediately shaken. All of his flesh and blood seemed to thrum just from the picture alone, as if it possessed a strange power of its own....

The second illustration depicted an azure dragon, twisting and turning among the clouds, which partially obscured it. When Bai Xiaochun looked at it, it seemed to brand itself into his mind. All of a sudden, he could picture the image mentally. And yet, as soon as that happened, the image faded away, and his mind filled with rumbling sounds. At the same time, the spiritual power in his body seemed to surge out of control, swirling through him painfully. He took back control, and a cold sweat broke out all over him.

“What kind of cultivation technique is this!?” Taking a deep breath, he declined to look at the third illustration. Instead, he went back to reexamine the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture mnemonic.

After a bit of time, he looked up, his eyes flickering with enlightenment.

“Cultivation via visualization!” he murmured.

It was a very mysterious form of cultivation. According to the level one had reached, one would observe various illustrations, and thus cultivate oneself. Presumably, the three illustrations contained some mysterious energy of heaven and earth that would affect the body upon observing them.

To a disciple who had just joined the sect, such a method would not be very suitable for cultivation. Furthermore, attempting it would surely be harmful to the body. But after reaching the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and having built up a significant amount of spiritual power, it would then be possible to cultivate it.



After pondering for a bit, Bai Xiaochun decided not to set his aims too high. He started with the first illustration, looking at it until he began to tremble visibly, and his qi and blood were flowing at top speed. As he did, his skin began to shine with silver light because of his Undying Skin. Gradually, Bai Xiaochun got the feeling... that when combined with his Undying Skin, the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture could make him significantly stronger.

Time went by. During the half month which passed, Bai Xiaochun occasionally concocted some medicine while simultaneously cultivating the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture. Slowly but surely, his cultivation grew. Furthermore, the silver color of his Undying Skin grew deeper. Clearly, he was making progress with both.

Soon, he realized that because of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture, he didn't even need to cultivate his Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art to improve his Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning. It was naturally advancing by leaps and bounds.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked by this, but after thinking about it for a while, came to a conclusion about what was happening.

“The Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture is a utility technique. With its help, all other divine abilities and magical techniques can become much more formidable. As for the shackles that the introduction mentioned....” After some more thought, he waved his finger, causing an illusory violet cauldron to appear.

It looked very realistic, was larger than the cauldrons from before, and exerted formidable pressure. Bai Xiaochun even could sense that if he wished, he could disperse the cauldron and draw the resulting spiritual power back into his body.

With a thought, he did just that, and the spiritual energy rushed back inside of him, replenishing most of what he had wasted to use the divine ability.

Bai Xiaochun was delighted. Being able to easily unleash and retract the cauldron was a hallmark of making significant progress with Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning.

“With the help of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture, I actually might be able to develop that Human Controlling Grand Magic I thought of before!” Even in his moment of joy, his expression suddenly flickered. Looking over at the main gate of his immortal’s cave, he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out. The door faded away, becoming invisible from his perspective, allowing him to see outside.

It was evening, and he could see over a hundred people flying in his direction from off in the distance. There were a few dozen who were faster than the others that reached his immortal’s cave first.

Among the group was a young man with handsome features. Unfortunately, his face was somewhat pale, and his eyes were bloodshot, as if with madness. He seemed unstable, as if the slightest poke might cause him to rave dementedly.

Bai Xiaochun immediately recognized the young man. He was none other than... Beihan Lie from the north bank!

The few dozen people next to him all had cultivation bases which exceeded that of the ordinary ninth level of Qi Condensation. There were even ten or so who were in the great circle of Qi Condensation. Shockingly, the rest of the large group which was currently catching up all were in the ninth level of Qi Condensation!

Next to Beihan Lie was a tall, muscular man who looked like a miniature mountain. His features were very similar to Beihan Lie's, and he had long, flowing hair. He stood there next to Beihan Lie, unmoving, bursting with an energy that shocked even Bai Xiaochun.

His aura seemed like something past the Qi Condensation stage, and he was surrounded by an invisible vortex that constantly gathered the surrounding energy of heaven and earth.

“Over a hundred Inner Sect disciples... all in the ninth and tenth levels of Qi Condensation!” Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he felt his scalp tingling. Without a moment of hesitation, he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, fully activating the cave's spell formation.

Every person in this group of over a hundred were Inner Sect disciples. More precisely, they were from Sunset Peak, and had come here to get revenge for their Junior Brother Beihan Lie.

The actions of this large group had attracted the attention of the Inner Sect disciples from Fragrant Cloud Peak. Zhou Xinqi was the first to emerge from her own immortal's cave, and soon, large numbers of Inner Sect disciples were flying over from different locations. As they surrounded the group of a hundred, people soon recognized the burly man standing next to Beihan Lie.

“Spiritual energy transformed into a vortex. That's... that's an energy which exceeds Qi Condensation. That's close to Foundation Establishment! He's half a step into Foundation Establishment!”

“That's the number one Inner Sect disciple from Sunset Peak, Beihan Feng!”

As everyone cried out in surprise and alarm, Bai Xiaochun sat there inside his immortal's cave, listening in with the aid of the spell formation. Soon, his eyes widened even further.

“Fellow disciples,” Beihan Feng said, “I can't blame the south bank for winning the Chosen battles. In fact, I offer my congratulations. My purpose in coming here today has nothing to do with matters between the south and north banks. This is a private matter of the Beihan Clan. The shameless and despicable Bai Xiaochun inflicted a wound upon my clan's Junior Brother that will never be healed. As his Elder Brother, how could I simply sit and do nothing!?”

“I have come here today to take compensation for my Junior Brother!” Before any of the Fragrant Cloud Peak Inner Sect disciples could even respond, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave.

“Bai Xiaochun, get the hell out here right now!”

Off to the side, tears appeared to be willing up in Beihan Lie’s bloodshot eyes. Staring at Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave, he screamed hysterically, “Bai Xiaochun, get your ass out here!”

After the Beihan brothers’ words faded away, Bai Xiaochun spoke, sounding very wronged. “You people are so unreasonable! I gave you a chance to concede, didn’t I? You can’t blame me. When that big dog pounced on you, I even thought of trying to separate you two....”

“Shut UP, Bai Xiaochun!” Beihan Lie shrieked. “Get out here right now! My differences with you are irreconcilable!!” It was as if Bai Xiaochun had just opened up old wounds. Beihan Lie looked insane as he charged forward and slammed into the immortal’s cave spell formation, seemingly intent on venting all of his pent up anger right then and there.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart trembled in fear, but when he saw that the surface of the spell formation simply rippled a bit, and clearly wasn’t even close to breaking, he calmed down a bit. Vowing not to go out, he looked at the maddened Beihan Lie and sighed.

“Beihan Lie,” he called out. “Listen, it’s really not that big of a deal. Think about it. Now that you and that big dog have a much closer relationship, you could say that you’ve profited from disaster. Your beast controlling magic will probably be much more incredible from here on out....” Bai Xiaochun really did want to

comfort Beihan Lie, and yet, before he could even finish speaking, Beihan Lie exploded in fury.

Beihan Feng's face turned grim, and he took a step forward and smashed his palm into the spell formation. The formation trembled, and Bai Xiaochun's heart began to pound.

By this point, the Fragrant Cloud Peak Inner Sect disciples couldn't stand idly by any longer. Although they weren't very familiar with Bai Xiaochun, if they just stood around while a bunch of Sunset Peak disciples came and did whatever they wanted, the reputation of the Fragrant Cloud Peak Inner Sect would reach rock bottom.

"Stay your hand!" people began to shout.

The Fragrant Cloud Peak Inner Sect disciples flew forward to interfere, but before they could reach the immortal's cave, the Sunset Peak disciples blocked their paths. No deadly combat broke out; all the Sunset Peak disciples had to do was block the paths of the Fragrant Cloud Peak disciples long enough to give Beihan Feng some time.

The situation had already reached the point where open conflict was breaking out between the disciples of two mountain peaks, which was a violation of sect rules. However, Beihan Feng didn't care. The Beihan Clan was also a Prestige clan, so as long as he didn't actually kill anyone, he wouldn't be punished very severely.

Rumbling could be heard as the spell formation began to twist

and distort, and the ripples became more intense. However, this was not an ordinary immortal's cave. At first, Bai Xiaochun was worried, but soon he realized that nothing more was happening, and he relaxed.

However, being a good person, he really felt bad, and therefore decided to offer more advice about how to resolve the situation.

“You really can't blame me.... How about you make dog stew out of that dog? That way everyone will know that Beihan Lie is manly and tough, and that he'll eat anyone who pounces on him....” By that point, he realized that maybe he'd gone a bit too far, and was about to reign things back in when Beihan Lie coughed up a massive mouthful of blood. Hair completely disheveled, and almost completely out of his mind, he head-butted the spell formation.

Bai Xiaochun's heart continued to pound in terror.

# Chapter 100: Still Won't Apologize To Your Sect Uncle Bai?

---

Bai Xiaochun felt more wronged than ever. Of course, he had long since come to the realization that whenever he needed to explain himself the most, he would go overboard and end up with egg on his face.

That wasn't his intention nor his desire....

Bai Xiaochun's explanation enraged Beihan Feng even further. He took a deep breath and waved his hand, causing pulses of black light to instantly form in his palm, which rapidly took the shape of a black crescent moon!

It was like the moon on the darkest of nights, and pulsed with a terrifying power that caused the heart to pound. Beihan Feng immediately shoved the moon toward the cave's spell formation.

A boom echoed out, and the entire immortal's cave trembled. The spell formation shield outside distorted madly, and even seemed to be on the verge of cracking open in several places. However, in the end... it didn't break. In the blink of an eye, it was back to normal.

Even Beihan Feng gasped. The strength of this spell formation was giving him quite a headache. Gritting his teeth in fury, he was just about to continue attacking, when all of a sudden a cold snort could be heard from off in the distance.



“Beihan Feng, what are you doing? Stay your hand immediately!” The voice echoed like thunder, causing everything to shake, especially around Beihan Feng. Trembling, even Beihan Lie ceased his ravings and fell back, heart pounding with fear.

The other Inner Sect disciples from Sunset Peak all retreated, faces falling. Looking up, they saw six beams of light flying through the air toward them, coming from Mount Daoseed.

The person who had just spoken was a middle-aged man, clad in a black robe. Fury filled his face, and he emanated a terrifyingly destructive aura.

Beihan Lie and Beihan Feng both murmured, “Master...”

Trembling, they clasped hands in greeting, and as for all the other Inner Sect disciples from Sunset Peak, they trembled and bowed their heads.

“Greetings, peak lord.”

The middle-aged man was none other than Beihan Lie’s Master, and the peak lord of Sunset Peak, who had glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun when he took Beihan Lie away from the Chosen battles.

“You ill-mannered curs!” he shouted. “Could you lose any more face than this? Get your asses off to the side, I’ll deal with you later! Everyone else, when you back to the mountain, go into

secluded meditation for three years as punishment!”

The Beihan siblings were trembling inwardly, unsure of exactly what was happening. They knew that their actions were a violation of sect rules, but they couldn't imagine what had riled up their normally kind and gentle master. After all, back when the original incident had occurred, their Master had also been furious with Bai Xiaochun.

The Beihan siblings both assumed that something else must have happened that they weren't aware of, and it left their hearts simmering with fear. Stepping back anxiously, they looked up at their Master floating there in midair, and their scalps began to tingle. Next to the peak lord of Sunset Peak were the three peak lords from the north bank. The peak lord from Irispetal Peak, the old woman, looked especially displeased as she stared down coldly at the Sunset Peak disciples.

In addition to the four peak lords from the north bank, Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong was also present, as was another individual. That final individual wore a cool expression on his face, as if he didn't care at all about the dispute playing out down below. He was... peak lord of Fragrant Cloud Peak, Li Qinghou.

Sinking feelings rose up in the hearts of the Sunset Peak disciples, and as for the Inner Sect disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak, they were completely taken aback. Everyone suddenly felt as if something completely odd were taking place.... The truth was that the north bank usually acted in domineering fashion. When situations similar to this had arisen in the past, and they had, the north bank would usually put the south bank in place quickly,

even with big issues.

For them to be as enraged as they were today was a rare thing.

Sitting there in his immortal's cave, Bai Xiaochun was also shocked as he stared at the crowd outside.

Up in midair, the four north bank peak lords looked around at the scene down below. Then the old woman from Irispetal Peak cleared her throat and looked over at Li Qinghou.

“Peak Lord Li, about what we were discussing earlier, do you think...?”

Li Qinghou shook his head slightly and said, “Were it not for this little mishap, I would have agreed. But this complicates matters. You're on your own now.”

With that he looked down at Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, a faint smile on his face.

“Er....” The old woman glanced over at the peak lord from Sunset Peak, looking a bit frustrated. The peak lord from Sunset Peak sighed, well aware that the trouble had been caused by disciples from his own mountain peak. That meant that he had to resolve the situation. Plastering a smile onto his face, he looked down at Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave.

“Junior Brother Xiaochun....” The words almost stuck in his

mouth on the way out, but he managed to utter them. There was really no other choice. After some discussion, the north bank leadership had come to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun's Aphrodisiac Pill was of critical importance to them. After some further study of the battle beasts which had been affected, they realized that the pill could even affect first order bloodlines.

That virtually drove them crazy. To the north bank, Bai Xiaochun's medicinal pill was almost like a holy relic. For various reasons, it was often difficult for some of the most powerful battle beasts to breed. There were even some first order bloodline beasts that would only go into heat once every few dozen years, or even once in a hundred years. That had been one of the most frustrating problems for the north bank for years on end.

A perfect example was the blue-eyed nethermoon ape, one of Sunset Peak's two holy beasts. It was reaching the end of its lifespan, and still had not produced any offspring. It was a very critical situation.

But then Bai Xiaochun came along with his heaven-defying medicinal pill, which the four peak lords of the north bank were determined to acquire. Unfortunately for them, no amount of research led them to any description of the pill, and eventually they had no choice but to acknowledge that the pill... had been invented by Bai Xiaochun.

Afterward, they went to the sect leader and Li Qinghou to ask for it.

If it were any other disciple, even an Inner Sect disciple, all they

would have to do was express their desire, and it would be fulfilled. There were many ways to force such a disciple to obediently hand over the pill formula. But Bai Xiaochun was different.... He was a Prestige disciple, and with that status, they had no choice but to offer him compensation of some sort.

Furthermore, without Bai Xiaochun's consent, they would never be able to get the pill; forcing him to hand it over wasn't an option.... The peak lords had all discussed the matter. and even agreed to some demands put forth by Li Qinghou, but before they could formalize the agreement, they got news that the Sunset Peak disciples had gone to cause trouble for Bai Xiaochun. The four peak lords from the north bank were instantly enraged.

Their biggest fear was that the Sunset Peak disciples wouldn't control themselves, and end up offending Bai Xiaochun, thus making it even harder for them to acquire his medicinal pill.

And that was what had led to the current scene.

“Junior Brother Xiaochun, would you mind coming out to discuss something?” The peak lord from Sunset Peak did his best to seem as friendly as possible, keeping his voice calm and mild. The surrounding Sunset Peak disciples were shaking, and the Beihan siblings stood there wide-eyed, as mute as wooden chickens.

Inside his immortal's cave, Bai Xiaochun looked up for a moment in thought. What was happening outside seemed odd, to say the least, especially considering the look in Li Qinghou's eyes. After a bit of thought, he couldn't pinpoint exactly what was happening, but he had some speculations.

Finally, he spoke out in a bemoaning voice. “Those disciples of yours are too fierce. I just about lost my poor little life right now. I really don’t dare to go out....”

The heartrending way he spoke caused a cold wind to creep up the backs of the Beihan siblings. As for the other Sunset Peak disciples, their faces flickered with various emotions. They could all see how seriously the four peak lords seemed to take Bai Xiaochun, and how ingratiating they were being. After hearing Bai Xiaochun’s response, they could only imagine what fate was in store for them later.

The faces of Li Qinghou and Zheng Yuandong twitched slightly, and the peak lord from Sunset Peak turned to glare angrily at his disciples before shouting, “Apologize to your Sect Uncle Bai immediately!”

Looking like they were about to cry, the Sunset Peak disciples immediately clasped hands in the direction of Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave and apologized.

In his grief and indignation, Beihan Lie was about to argue, but when he saw the fierce gleam in his Master’s eyes, he bowed his head and clasped his hands toward the immortal’s cave.

“Sect Uncle Bai... I... I... I apologize!!”

Beihan Feng looked up sullenly at his Master, only to find the look in the man’s eyes growing sharper by the second. Heart

trembling, veins bulging out on his forehead, he had no choice but to clasp hands and apologize.

Everyone was left shaking and staring in anger at the immortal's cave.

Trying very much to seem pleasant, the peak lord from Sunset Peak said, "Junior Brother Xiaochun, how was that?"

After a moment passed, an opening appeared in the spell formation, and Bai Xiaochun poked his head out. After looking around, he coughed dryly, then swaggered out, chin stuck up, looking as arrogant as ever.

"Let bygones be bygones. As a member of the senior generation, I won't lower myself to bickering with these Sect Nephews." With that, he swished his sleeve.

Beihan Lie stood there, eyes bloodshot, trembling violently. It looked as if he almost couldn't restrain himself from leaping forward and punching Bai Xiaochun in the face. However, he didn't dare to do such a thing. His Elder Brother Beihan Feng felt as if the world were spinning around him, as if he were about to go mad.

The looks in their eyes angered Bai Xiaochun, who glared over at them fiercely. Now who's afraid? he thought. Not me! I'm not afraid of anybody!

The peak lord from Sunset Peak took a deep breath. Voice calm, he said, “Xiaochun, that aph... aphrodisiac pill of yours. Did you create it yourself?”

As the words left his mouth, the other peak lords from the north bank all looked down with anticipation gleaming in their eyes. The Beihan siblings’ minds reeled as they suddenly realized what was happening. In their bitterness, their hatred for Bai Xiaochun grew even stronger.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times as he also came to realize what was happening. Sticking his chest out, he nodded grandly.

“That’s right. That mighty medicinal pill was created using a secret formula that I myself created. No one except for me can concoct it!”

The four peak lords’ hearts swelled with joy, but they did their best to keep it from showing it on their faces. The peak lord from Sunset Peak smiled and nodded.

“Junior Brother Xiaochun,” he said in the most charming fashion possible, “the fact that you were able to create a pill formula like that at such a young age shows that you truly deserve to be called Chosen. That pill formula is of vital importance to the Spirit Stream Sect. How about I offer you 100,000 merit points for it? What do you say? Junior Brother Xiaochun, if you give that pill formula to the sect, it would be a great service. As a Prestige disciple, our sect is your home, you know.”



“Very well!” Bai Xiaochun replied, looking as though he’d just gone through hell and high water for the sect. With that, he began to explain the pill formula to the four delighted peak lords.

“The ingredients are Brightburst Seed, Paradise Wood Flower, Spiritwinter Bamboo, and... eee? What else? How come I can’t think of it? Could it be that I was so frightened just now that I forgot it?” Bai Xiaochun stood there frowning in thought.

Li Qinghou’s mouth twisted into a smile, and Zheng Yuandong shrugged helplessly. The four peak lords immediately realized what was happening, and smiled bitterly. The peak lord from Sunset Peak gritted his teeth and glared angrily over at his disciples.

As his gaze passed over them, the Sunset Peak disciples, including the Beihan siblings, all shivered.

# Chapter 101: Waterswamp Kingdom And Protomagnetic Wings!

---

The peak lord from Sunset Peak let out a cold harrumph and waved his right sleeve. Instantly, a powerful force descended onto the trembling Sunset Peak disciples. To them, it felt like mountains were crushing down on them, provoking miserable shrieks of pain.

The Beihan siblings felt even more pressure than the others. Their faces twisted in pain as their cultivation bases shook. Although their hatred for Bai Xiaochun surged, they couldn't let any of it show on their faces.

“The lot of you had better get the hell back to the north bank this instant! Go into secluded meditation and don't come out for ten years!” Although the peak lord of Sunset Peak was the one to take action, these were disciples from his mountain peak, so he was actually protecting them to some extent. Although he seemed to be acting harshly, he actually was sympathetic to their cause. With a wave of a sleeve, he caused a powerful wind to spring up that swept the Sunset Peak disciples off into the distance.

Looking back at Bai Xiaochun, he plastered another smile onto his face and slowly said, “Xiaochun, can you remember now?”

Bai Xiaochun knew that he shouldn't push things too far. Things had already worked out quite well for him, so he cleared his throat in satisfaction.

“Hahaha! There’s no need for all of this, Elder Brother. As a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader, how could I lower myself to the same level as those raucous Sect Nephews? What a bunch of naughty and mischievous kids.” The way Bai Xiaochun was acting as if he really were of the same generation as him caused the peak lord of Sunset Peak to grimace inwardly. Off to the side, Zheng Yuandong cleared his throat, and yet again wished he could take back his impulsive decision from years before.

Bai Xiaochun ignored the strange looks and puffed his chest out. Suppressing his feeling of pride, he prepared to finish explaining the pill formula.

At that point, Li Qinghou cleared his throat.

“Self-created pill formulas are precious to apothecaries,” he said coolly. “I wonder what else the north bank has prepared to offer in exchange for the formula.”

Bai Xiaochun blinked, and then stood there looking up at the four north bank peak lords.

The peak lords exchanged glances. Then the old woman from Irispetal Peak pulled out a green pearl filled with swirling mist. The magnetic pulses it emitted caused everything in the area to fill with ripples.

“This is a Protomagnetic Pearl,” she explained, “extracted from the heart of a Protomagnetic Giant. It even contains a bit of pure

protomagnetic power. Used on its own, it can exert influence on all magical items within a certain area. Even to Foundation Establishment cultivators, it could be considered an extraordinary treasure. It would be difficult to use directly with only a Qi Condensation cultivation base. However, the Heavenhorn Pavilion happens to have a pair of magnetic spirit wings which, if used with the Protomagnetic Pearl, can be a powerful trump card for the Qi Condensation stage. With those wings, you could move so fast that even a Foundation Establishment cultivator would have a hard time keeping up with you!

“Bai Xiaochun, having taken first place in the Chosen battles, you have the right to go select any treasure you want from the Chosen Pavilion. I’ve already taken the liberty of bringing the magnetic spirit wings to give you, along with the pearl, in exchange for the pill formula!” Even as the words left her mouth, the old woman waved her right hand, causing a set of green wings to appear. They, along with the pearl, flew over to float in front of Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes began to shine. He could already move with incredible quickness, but if a Foundation Establishment cultivator really wanted to chase him down, he wouldn’t be able to outrun them. However, with the Protomagnetic Pearl and the magnetic spirit wings in combination with his speed, he could move unbelievably quickly. A life-saving object such as that was something that left his heart pounding.

“Furthermore,” the old woman continued with a stiff smile, “if luck is on your side, you might even be able to sense the manifestation of protomagnetic power. With that, you might be able to gain enlightenment of one of the top ten secret magics of

the Spirit Stream Sect, Arcane Gravitational Repulsion!”

Bai Xiaochun licked his lips, and was just about to agree, when he suddenly stopped and looked over at Li Qinghou to see whether or not he approved. He had long since come to view Li Qinghou as one of his own relatives, and as such, would follow his lead. If Li Qinghou asked him to hand over the pill formula, then Bai Xiaochun would do so without hesitation.

To him, it was just a pill formula. To the north bank, it was like a holy relic. The truth was that Bai Xiaochun had lots of strange pills in his bag of holding. In fact, he was already coming to the conclusion that he should start testing some of them out to see what wondrous effects they might have.

Li Qinghou glanced at the Protomagnetic Pearl and the magnetic spirit wings, then looked over at the four north bank peak lords. Eventually, his gaze came to rest on the old woman. Eyes glittering, he suddenly said, “Add in one of the other ten secret magics, the legacy of the north bank... the Waterswamp Kingdom!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong’s eyelids twitched.

“Impossible!” barked the peak lord of Sunset Peak angrily. He wasn’t the only one to disagree so vehemently. The peak lord of Archway Peak, the old man, glared at Li Qinghou with wide eyes.

“Li the Swindler appears again!” he sneered. “This is

preposterous! The Waterswamp Kingdom is a legacy of the north bank, one of the top ten secret magics of the Spirit Stream Sect! It's a top-rated technique on the same level as Ghosts Haunt the Night. There is absolutely no way we'll give it to someone from the south bank!"

Bai Xiaochun looked up at the commotion above, and when he heard the peak lord from Archway Peak call Li Qinghou 'Li the Swindler', his jaw dropped.

"Is that supposed to be a joke?" Li Qinghou said coldly, flicking his sleeve. "A thousand years ago, Ghosts Haunt the Night was the legacy of Violet Cauldron Peak! You north bank people were happy to take it away in trade, but now that the south bank wants to trade for one of your legacy secret magics, you refuse? Ludicrous!"

The north bank's peak lords were at a loss for words.

The peak lord of Ghostfang Peak was a partially translucent figure whose features couldn't be seen clearly. Sighing, he said, "Ghosts Haunt the Night is a perfect match for Ghostfang Peak. Besides, all that happened years ago. It's not worth bringing up now. As far as the Waterswamp Kingdom goes, only a handful of people have ever successfully cultivated it, such as Patriarch Heavenwing, eight thousand years ago. Nobody else did anything with it other than produce some useless spirits. It's far too difficult. Peak Lord Li, why are you making things hard for us?"

"No Waterswamp Kingdom? No pill formula," Li Qinghou said with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron.

Bai Xiaochun looked up in wonderment as the peak lords argued about the Waterswamp Kingdom. He had been under the impression that the offer was good enough already, although the Waterswamp Kingdom had always sounded interesting to him. At the same time, he had a new understanding of Li Qinghou. He was truly providing a shining example of how to rip people off. Could that be why he had been called ‘Li the Swindler’?

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun looked up at Li Qinghou, his eyes shining with admiration.

The north bank peak lords grumbled a bit, but in the end, agreed to the demands. Although their legacy secret magic was important, the medicinal pill was even more precious to them.

Moments later, Li Qinghou directed Bai Xiaochun to explain the complete formula for the Aphrodisiac Pill. Considering how important the pill was, the peak lords had long since sealed the area tight so that no one would be able to eavesdrop.

After Bai Xiaochun finished, the four peak lords took some time to examine the complete formula. Then they nodded, and the old woman from Irispetal Peak tossed a blue jade slip out toward Bai Xiaochun.

“The Waterswamp Kingdom is one of the most powerful of the ten secret magics. It is a divine ability which requires that you observe all types of beasts, and use that knowledge to create your own life essence spirit. Creating something from nothing, use the

waterswamp to give it form, and summon a physical kingdom.

“For the past ten thousand years, everyone in the Spirit Stream Sect who has attempted to form a life essence spirit have produced simple, ordinary creatures. The only exceptions are Patriarch Heavenwing, who formed a domineering Heavenwing Gargoyle, as well as a few others like him.

“As for what type of life essence spirit is formed, that depends on the cultivator’s understanding of spirit creatures. If a hundred people cultivated the Waterswamp Kingdom, a hundred different life essence spirits would result, some powerful, some weak. Some, like the Heavenwing Gargoyle, were shockingly powerful. Others produced nothing more than a bunny or a snake.

“Bai Xiaochun, you are a south bank disciple, and although there is competition between the north and south banks, we are all one family. I truly hope that you can succeed in cultivating your own life essence spirit.” Of course, despite her words, neither she nor any of the other three peak lords truly believed that Bai Xiaochun would have any measure of success in his cultivation of the Waterswamp Kingdom.

One reason for that, of course, was that the Waterswamp Kingdom required one to carefully observe and study a large number of spirit creatures, something that was virtually impossible to do on the south bank.

The transaction having been completed, the four peak lords from the north bank left along with Zheng Yuandong. Li Qinghou stayed behind. There was warmth in his eyes, but it was hidden beneath



the sharp look that suddenly appeared.

He began by reprimanding Bai Xiaochun, telling him not to get arrogant over having taken first place in the Chosen battles. He then gave him some tips regarding his cultivation base, and finally gave him some more detailed information regarding the bracelet he'd given him, as well as the Protomagnetic Pearl.

“The Protomagnetic Pearl and the magnetic spirit wings will be of great use to you. Take the time to get familiar with how to use them. As for the Waterswamp Kingdom, it's even more profound than the Magic Plant Soldiers we have here on Fragrant Cloud Peak. By the way, the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture was created by the founding patriarch of the sect, who led the campaign from the Heavenspan delta into the Lower Reaches. Make sure to study it well. It will make things much smoother for you when I teach you the Magic Plant Soldiers technique.” After giving some more exhortation, he turned to leave.

Profoundly moved, Bai Xiaochun clasped hands and bowed deeply. However, he couldn't hold back from curiously asking, “Uncle Li, um... why did they call you Li the Swindler? That was ridiculous!”

Li Qinghou stopped in mid-stride. Face darkening, he glared back at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Stop prying into the affairs of adults! Just remember that we apothecaries treasure the Dao of medicine. We don't just give things out for free!”

With that, Li Qinghou left.

The more Bai Xiaochun thought about the matter, the more his eyes began to shine with praise. He was now almost completely convinced that acquiring medicinal pills from Li Qinghou must be quite a pain for most people....

After Li Qinghou left, Bai Xiaochun went back into his immortal's cave. Now that he knew the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture was created by the founding patriarch of the sect, his heart swelled with admiration.

“In the introduction to the scripture, the founding patriarch talked about shackles. I wonder what exactly those shackles are?” After some more thought, he came up with some ideas, but had no way to confirm whether or not they were correct. Shaking his head, he pulled out the Protomagnetic Pearl and, following the instructions given by Li Qinghou, put it into his mouth and swallowed it.

The pearl dissolved into mist which flowed through his body and came to rest in his dantian region. There was nothing uncomfortable about the sensation, and in fact, he even felt a bit lighter. After moving around a bit, he realized that he could move even more quickly than before. It was almost as if some strange connection now existed between him and his surroundings.

Filled with a sense of wonder, he produced the magnetic spirit wings. They were green, and as diaphanous as the [wings of a cicada](#), almost transparent. After a moment, Bai Xiaochun exhaled some spiritual energy onto the wings, and they began to melt. It took the time it takes an incense stick to burn, and during the

process, his eyes glittered. Eventually, the wings melted into his palm, and then appeared on his back.

Like blood dissolving in water, they became a part of him, and were as easy to control as his own arms. Expression brightening, he exercised a single thought, and the wings fluttered.

He instantly transformed into nothing more than afterimages, shooting at high speed toward the wall of the immortal's cave. He let out a shriek as he tried to stop, but was unfamiliar with controlling the wings and slammed into the wall.

A boom rang out, and the entire immortal's cave shook. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun's fleshly body was quite tough, and nothing happened other than him ending up being embedded in the stone wall. After a long moment passed, he flopped down onto the ground and let out a groan.

Gritting his teeth, he struggled to his feet and glanced up at the spot where he'd run into the wall. Not daring to perform any more tests indoors, he walked outside, summoned his courage, and then flapped the wings again. In the blink of an eye, he was far off in the distance.

A few days later, he was much more familiar with how to control the speed of the wings, and it was a wonderful sensation. He almost felt invincible.

“Hahaha! I'm so fast that not even Elder Zhou could catch me!” He threw his head back and laughed uproariously as he flew a few

circles in the air before returning to his immortal's cave.

## Chapter 102: Is Anyone Around?

---

Months flew by. Bai Xiaochun quickly became very familiar with the areas on Fragrant Cloud Peak set aside for the Inner Sect. Eventually, the novelty of being an Inner Sect disciple began to wear off.

He spent most of his time in his immortal's cave, either practicing cultivation or concocting medicine in his personal medicine concocting workshop. By this point, he had created quite a few Aphrodisiac Pills.

He was happy. His purpose in practicing cultivation was to live forever, and the higher his cultivation base grew, the greater his longevity became.

His main interest was concocting spirit medicines. After all, he still dreamed of concocting a pill that could help him live forever. In order to make that dream come true, he constantly worked with spirit medicine. However, the cruel reality of the situation was that after a few months passed, he found that, to his bitterness, he had run out of medicinal plants.

Even though the prize for taking first place in the Chosen battles had been 10,000 spirit stones, the ingredients for tier-3 spirit medicines weren't sold in the market outside the sect. He could only rely on people from the cultivator clans to find them for him, and the prices were exorbitant.

The best thing to do was build up enough merit points to be able

to acquire the ingredients from the sect.

“Merit points....” he thought as he sat there in his immortal’s cave, frowning. What he lacked most was merit points. After some hesitation, he left his immortal’s cave and went to the Mission Stele set aside for Inner Sect disciples.

Back in the Outer Sect, the Missions Office had always been packed, but the Inner Sect was different. Inner Sect disciples were all very busy, and viewed their time as precious. Only a few people could be seen in the area. Bai Xiaochun strolled up and stood in front of the stele, trying to pick a mission.

“That one’s way too dangerous!” he muttered. “That one doesn’t give enough merit points! I don’t want any long-term missions....”

Eventually, his eyes came to rest on a mission assigned by one of the sect elders, which called for Lifestealer cores. For every core provided, 1,000 merit points would be rewarded.

It even provided the most common location to find Lifestealers, which was in the Wildweed Mountains a short distance from the Spirit Stream Sect. Muttering to himself in thought, Bai Xiaochun recalled the description of Lifestealers from the fourth volume of spirit creatures. Actually, they weren’t wild beasts, but rather, a miraculous parasitic life form.

They would select a host, a wild beast of some sort, which they would then cause to grow a second head. When the second head was fully formed, the beast would then wither up and die, and the

matured Lifestealer would transform into a Ninedays Finch.

During the parasitic phase of its life, it was extremely useful as an ingredient in various types of medicines. However, once it matured and exploded out from the second head, becoming a Ninedays Finch, it was completely useless. Furthermore, Ninedays Finches only lived for nine days, after which they would die, producing a new Lifestealer. The Lifestealer would then select a new host, and the process would begin again.

It was almost like the cycle of reincarnation....

Lifestealers were very rare, and in some ways, they lived forever, eternally reincarnating over and over again.

Bai Xiaochun clearly remembered how impressed he had been the first time he read about Lifestealers in the fourth volume of spirit creatures.

“The hard part of this mission is actually finding the Lifestealers. The Wildweed Mountains are too vast. It would be way too annoying to try to find them one by one. Accumulating merit points that way would be a waste of time.”

After doing some more research into the Wildweed Mountains, he confirmed that despite how vast they were, most animals were under the Foundation Establishment level.

Eventually, he decided to accept the mission. However, he didn't

immediately set forth from the sect. First, he returned to his immortal's cave to make a few preparations. Finally, he hopped onto the Golden Crow Sword and shot off into the distance.

The Wildweed Mountains weren't very far from the Spirit Stream Sect. Considering his speed when using the Golden Crow Sword, it would only take a day of travel to reach them. Unfortunately, due to the fact that his current cultivation base too low to be able to fly for a long time, he had to alternate between flying and running. Four days later, he finally reached the Wildweed Mountains.

A majestic scene spread out in front of him, with lushly vegetated mountains rising up in all directions. It was like a never-ending jungle, from within which rose the cries of various birds and beasts.

Instead of going to search for Lifestealers, he explored the mountains for about half a month until he found a valley which acted as a natural pathway between two main parts of the jungle. There, he settled down in the branches of a tall tree and peered down into the valley below.

“Using normal search methods would be a waste of time, and would rely on blind luck. Even with fortune on my side, I might only find one. If I don't get lucky, I might not be able to find a single one in a month.

“It's time to show off how smart I am.” Sticking his chin up, he blurred into motion, shooting off into the distance.



The next day, he stood at the top of a mountain, feeling the direction of the wind. Just as he was about to produce an Aphrodisiac Pill, he suddenly thought of something, and called out at the top of his lungs, “Is anyone around?! Are there any disciples from the Spirit Stream Sect here?!” From the high-pitched tone of his cry, it almost sounded like he was crying out for help.

Some distance away, a figure could be seen in the jungle, fighting with a wild beast. It was an icily arrogant young man wearing the robe of an Inner Sect disciple of the Spirit Stream Sect. When he heard Bai Xiaochun’s cry, a look of scorn appeared in his eyes.

“Another disciple with a weak cultivation base who’s overestimated himself and is now crying out for help. Only the strong should come out into the Wildweed Mountains.” He arrogantly chose not to even attempt to help out. Although the sect emphasized teamwork, some people were naturally unsociable, and that couldn’t be avoided.

After crying out a few times but getting no response, Bai Xiaochun felt a bit more at ease. With that, he tossed out the Aphrodisiac Pill. Moments later, a popping sound could be heard as the pill exploded, transforming into a fine powder which was carried off by the wind.

Soon, the animals some distance away, regardless of what they were doing, caught the scent of the powder in the wind and began to tremble. Eyes bloodshot, they began to howl at the tops of their lungs.

As soon as the howling sounds rose up, two wings popped out behind Bai Xiaochun, and he sped away.

The arrogant disciple from earlier suddenly noticed that the beast he was fighting had begun trembling. Its eyes turned red, and, howling, it pounced toward him. Badly frightened, the young man took to flight.

Unfortunately, no matter what he did, the beast only continued to howl and chase him down. Its eyes were bright red, and it seemed to have gone mad. Shocked, the young man fled for his life until he had no choice but to cry out for help.

By that time, Bai Xiaochun was too far away to hear....

Six hours later in another windy area, Bai Xiaochun cried out a few times, waited for a bit, and seeing that no one responded, threw out another Aphrodisiac Pill.

Soon, the howls of beasts rose up.

For the following two days, he ceaselessly traveled in a set perimeter around the valley he'd picked, throwing out Aphrodisiac Pills. He quickly covered a large area, within which all of the animals were going mad, howling at the tops of their lungs and lunging around violently.

Seeing that he'd reached a point where things were almost beyond his control, Bai Xiaochun flew back to the valley he'd

selected. Eyes shining, he waved the Golden Crow Sword to cut open a small path in the trees, then pulled out a bunch of Pheromone Pills and crushed them. Soon, a fragrant aroma began to spread out.

He was very careful not to get any of the powder on himself, and even as he backed away, changed into a new set of clothes just to be safe. Then he perched above the valley and looked down toward the path he'd created.

“Alright, lovely beasts... hurry up,” he said, humming a little tune as he waited eagerly.

Time passed. The aroma of the Pheromone Pill slowly spread out, and the beasts which had been affected by the Aphrodisiac Pill slowly began to go more and more crazy. Howling, they began to charge toward the valley at top speed, more and more of them, like a surging tide that caused the ground to quake.

Soon, the first wave of beasts was closing in, and Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet and looked down with rapt attention at the valley below. In the blink of an eye, a vast group of strange beasts could be seen charging down the path he'd created. Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide at the sight of so many creatures. But then, his eyes glittered, and his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture. Instantly, the Golden Crow Sword flew out toward a fierce-looking tiger.

Shockingly, a second head was growing out of the tiger's back. Golden light flickered, and the second head exploded. A core flew out, which Bai Xiaochun expertly grabbed ahold of and then threw

into his bag of holding. Next, the golden light flashed toward another two-headed creature.

The flood of beasts lasted for about two hours, and the valley was almost completely destroyed in the process. Bai Xiaochun was radiant with delight. His sword flashed over and over again, and by the time the flood of beasts had dispersed, he was delighted to find that he had collected ten Lifestealer cores.

“Bai Xiaochun’s wits come out on top again!” Looking very pleased, he stored the cores safely in his bag of holding and then blurred into motion, heading off to another part of the Wildweed Mountains.

Not very long after he left, a young man could be seen in the jungle. His clothes were tattered, and he seemed to be in a very sorry state. He was shaking, and even had trouble walking. A blank look could be seen in his eyes that very closely resembled the look which had appeared in Beihan Lie’s eyes not so long ago....

Tears streamed down his cheeks as he muttered, “What’s going on in the Wildweed Mountains...? What’s going on with the world...? The beasts here don’t eat people, they... I... I...”

Days flew by. Bai Xiaochun used the Aphrodisiac Pill to throw the Wildweed Mountains into complete chaos. Everywhere he went, the beasts would go mad. Of course, before throwing the pills out into the air, he would always call out to make sure he was alone.

Occasionally disciples would respond, and when they did, he

would carefully explain his plan, ask them to leave, and give them a Lifestealer core as compensation. He would also ask them to spread word to other disciples to stay away. Most of the disciples that saw him recognized him, and would flee, trembling in fear.

# Chapter 103: I Want To Serve The Sect!

---

There weren't many Spirit Stream Sect disciples in the Wildweed Mountains, only a few dozen. The area didn't have many Foundation Establishment-level beasts, but it still had its dangers, even for Inner Sect disciples.

Only people who considered themselves to be especially powerful would go there.

When Bai Xiaochun cried out his warnings, some disciples would respond and heed his advice. They would take his apology gift and leave. However, a few bull-headed individuals would arrogantly assume that he was crying out for help, and would pretend they couldn't hear him. Some of them even hoped to collect his bag of holding after he died.

They would continue whatever it was they were doing, and think little more of the matter. But it wouldn't take long before they realized the beasts were acting strange, impulsive and maddened.

Shangguan Tianyou was in the Wildweed Mountains, and as soon as he heard Bai Xiaochun calling out, his eyes flickered, and he ignored him. He was on the same mission as Bai Xiaochun, looking for Lifestealers, but at the moment, he was shocked by the sight of a huge bear in the sixth level of Qi Condensation, who was wrapped around a tree, banging into it over and over again....

It wasn't his first time seeing something like that. He'd seen a rabbit earlier that had ambushed him with raving madness. When

he realized that the situation seemed familiar, his scalp suddenly went numb.

“Something’s off here. What’s changed in the Wildweed Mountains?!” Then he thought back to Bai Xiaochun’s Aphrodisiac Pill, and his heart seized.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun had over thirty Lifestealer cores in his bag of holding, and was continuing his work with the Aphrodisiac Pills. About half a month later, he was overjoyed to discover a V-shaped valley located deep within the mountains, a place that had a strong wind....

The valley would suck in the wind and then vent it out to fill a large portion of the Wildweed Mountains. Based on Bai Xiaochun’s calculations, it would only take three days for the wind from the valley to fill nearly half of the Wildweed Mountains. Even standing there in the wind, he would only last for about one breath of time before losing his footing. He immediately felt connected to the place, as if by destiny.

Hair whipping about, he looked down at the spot where the wind shot out and said, “This is definitely the best place to disseminate powder throughout the mountains!! There shouldn’t be any fellow disciples here either. I can safely harvest to my heart’s content!” Bai Xiaochun was starting to get very excited. In order to ensure nothing bad happened to his fellow disciples, he’d already given out about ten cores. However, he didn’t regret that at all. He was sure that he could get more. He could even visualize the merit points flowing in.

Taking a deep breath, he brought out all of the rest of the Aphrodisiac Pills and crushed them. The rushing wind immediately carried the powder out into the rest of the Wildweed Mountains.

Bai Xiaochun stood on a nearby mountain peak, looking out proudly at the jungle below, feeling very heroic.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, have worked tirelessly to benefit the Wildweed Mountains. One can only imagine how many animals will be born in the coming years.... What a wonderful meritorious service.”

He sighed emotionally as howls began to rise from within the forest. More and more howls could be heard, until they filled the air ceaselessly. In one day, twenty percent of the Wildweed Mountains had been covered.... The roars reached a shocking level. Three days later... half of the Wildweed Mountains were going mad!

At that point, Bai Xiaochun flew along, dispersing Pheromone Pills every so often to attract the nearby beasts. At the same time, he collected more and more Lifestealer cores.

He was very pleased with everything. Not only was he collecting plenty of cores, he was also bringing happiness to all the creatures in the Wildweed Mountains. When he saw so many animals pouncing on each other, he couldn't help but marvel at how he was benefiting the environment.

“What a good person I am,” he thought to himself. “The beasts in



these mountains are definitely going to thank me later.” And so he continued along, throwing out Pheromone Pills all the way.

Of course, there were some disciples in the mountains who had ignored his earlier cries. Their eyes soon went wide at the maddened state of the animals. The sight of all the animals pouncing on one another... left the disciples gasping.

“What’s... what’s going on!?”

“Why... why does this scene seem so familiar....” Shocked, the disciples all began to flee in terror.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Shangguan Tianyou was going all out to kill the nearby beasts and fly away. His heart filled with terror when he recalled what had occurred to Beihan Lie, and he began to shiver.

Unfortunately for this handful of people, they were deep within the Wildweed Mountains, and getting out was no easy task. That was especially the case considering that all of the beasts in the area were going completely mad....

Bai Xiaochun flew along, happily tossing Pheromone Pills around. He attracted large numbers of beasts, and collected numerous Lifestealer cores. By the time he left the Wildweed Mountains half a month later, he had two hundred cores in his bag of holding.

Completely satisfied, he headed back toward the sect.

Some days after he left, Shangguan Tianyou and the other disciples finally emerged. Their faces were pale and filled with bitterness, and their hair disheveled. They were all in bad condition, with blank looks on their faces. After finally emerging, they would throw their heads back and howl bitterly.

As for what exactly had occurred within those mountains... it was a complete mystery to them.

After returning to the sect, Bai Xiaochun raced directly to the Missions Office. When the disciples there saw that he was turning in two hundred Lifestealer cores, their eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. After incredulously examining the cores, they looked back at Bai Xiaochun in shock.

Throughout the years, Lifestealer core missions would pop up occasionally, although usually only one at a time. Generally speaking, it would take a whole year for a disciple to collect a mere ten of them.

But within a few months, Bai Xiaochun had managed to collect an unthinkable amount.

“He definitely deserves to be the Junior Brother of the sect leader, a Prestige disciple, and the first place winner of the Chosen battles....” The other Inner Sect disciples looked enviously at Bai Xiaochun. After clearing his inventory, he racked up 200,000 merit points. Although he tried to put on a show of looking indifferent, it was impossible for him to completely conceal how proud of

himself he was.

The matter shook the entire south bank. Anyone who heard that someone had collected 200,000 merit points in one shot almost couldn't believe it. But then word began to spread from the disciples Bai Xiaochun had advised to leave the Wildweed Mountains, and soon, the three mountain peaks of the south bank were buzzing with the news.

“What a monster!!”

“Crazy! He filled half of the Wildweed Mountains with Aphrodisiac Pills!!”

“We won't be able to go there for a long time now....”

Even as the discussions raged, Shangguan Tianyou and the other bedraggled disciples began to filter back into the sect. Shangguan Tianyou was aware that Bai Xiaochun was the cause of what had happened, so he wasn't so surprised at the results. But when the other disciples realized the situation, they howled at the tops of their lungs. However, there was nothing they could do about Bai Xiaochun. After all... he had warned them repeatedly, and they had heard, but chosen to ignore him. Now they regretted what they had done; a mere response on their part, and they could have avoided such a tragic fate.

Bai Xiaochun was extremely pleased with the results. In subsequent days, he would often appear at the Missions Office, whereupon he would select missions involving collecting things

from beasts.

He almost seemed addicted. After each mission, he would concoct batches of medicinal pills and head out again.... Each time, he drove more disciples mad. Whether those disciples were out on missions or not, it didn't matter. After all, any location Bai Xiaochun went to on his own missions had to be avoided for significant periods of time afterward.

They were far too dangerous....

The Cloudpeak Mountains, Frostforest Mountains, Brightsummit Mountains, Lasteast Mountains....

For an entire year, Bai Xiaochun was a mission-accomplishing maniac. He swept through all of the missions that involved beasts, and his harvests were always incredible. Each and every time, the Missions Office was left completely shaken. At the same time, countless Inner Sect disciples were driven to madness.

Eventually, he cleared all of the beast-related missions on Fragrant Cloud Peak, after which he went to Green Crest Peak, and then Violet Cauldron Peak. He took all of the missions there, and soon helped the disciples there realize what a true missions fiend was.

In the end, the Inner Sect disciples of the south bank were driven to complete despair. None of the mountain ranges near the sect were safe to enter, as they were filled with countless sexually charged beasts....

Having no other option, hundreds of Inner Sect disciples from the three mountain peaks signed a petition to the sect, requesting that Bai Xiaochun be exempted from mission service....

Li Qinghou didn't want to interfere; it was a rare occasion when Bai Xiaochun was so enthused about serving the sect. The matter turned into a huge headache for the sect leader. He was coming to find that after Bai Xiaochun joined the sect, he would frequently be struck with such headaches. Every time he heard Bai Xiaochun's name mentioned, he would subconsciously sigh.

"It's almost better when he's not working hard. As soon as he gets serious... it's really... ai, Bai Xiaochun causes a disaster no matter which mission he picks!

"Doesn't he want to work at pill concocting? Go concoct pills then! The sect will provide the merit points, as long things calm down...."

When the signatures on the petition rose from a few hundred to over a thousand, the sect leader gritted his teeth and went to discuss the matter with Li Qinghou. Finally, they exempted Bai Xiaochun from mission service for the following ten years.

He was the only disciple in the sect who didn't have to do missions, but would still get a huge amount of merit points from the sect.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't very happy about the situation. He had been

browsing missions at the Missions Office, and had just found one he wanted to take, when he got the notification. He was stunned.

“What the hell?” he exclaimed loudly. “I want to serve the sect! I want to work hard! This is ridiculous!” Under the solemn gazes of the Missions Office disciples, he sighed, then stuck his chin up and swished his sleeve.

“With the snap of a finger, I reduced the Missions Office... to ashes.” Shaking his head, he sighed. Looking very lonely, he made his way off into the distance.

## Chapter 104: I Guarantee....

---

Bai Xiaochun trudged back to his immortal's cave, where he sat stewing in melancholy.

Finally, he sighed. "It's not a good thing for someone to be too outstanding. I'm the perfect example. The sect leadership was so worried about how outstanding I am that they exempted me from doing missions for ten years, but will still send me merit points every month." He sat there, reveling a bit in being able to worry about things like this, and wondering what he was supposed to do considering that he was so outstanding....

"Ah well, I guess it doesn't matter. Since I can't go out on missions, I might as well concoct medicine. After all, the reason I was doing the missions in the first place was to get merit points." With such thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun resigned himself to sacrificing his own benefit for the betterment of the sect, and walked over to his medicine concocting workstation.

"I need to master all of the concocting methods for tier-3 spirit medicines!" With that, his expression turned somber.

Time passed. Half a year.

Other than his routine cultivation, he spent all of his time concocting medicine. When he lacked ingredients, he cashed in merit points. As time went on, he grew more frenzied, apparently unwilling to slow down until he had mastered everything to do with tier-3 spirit medicines.

Because he wasn't out doing missions, the sect slowly returned to normal. Many people sighed in relief, especially Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong, who was finally able to feel at ease inwardly. By now, he was sure that exempting Bai Xiaochun from mission duty had been the right thing to do.

He wasn't the only one. Li Qinghou, as well as the other south bank peak lords and elders, all felt much more at ease. In fact, at one of the regular south bank council meetings, the Foundation Establishment cultivators happened to bring up the matter.

“Bai Xiaochun has been focused on concocting medicine lately. The sect has really calmed down.”

“Medicine concocting is a good thing. Have him keep practicing. It's the safest option, anyway. With him focused on that, he won't be causing problems for people outside.” The entire group was all smiles; the past half year of peace and quiet left them all sighing happily.

And yet, just days after their meeting, a massive explosion echoed out on Fragrant Cloud Peak. It came from the direction of Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, and caused everything in the area to tremble violently. Numerous Inner Sect disciples were badly startled, and the Outer Sect disciples were left trembling in fear.

“What just happened?!?”

“Heavens! Could the Spirit Stream Sect be under attack?!?”



As everyone devolved into a commotion, Bai Xiaochun lurched out of his medicine concocting workstation, coughing, face tinged with ash, nose running and tears streaming down his face. He quickly washed off in the hot spring, and then frowned.

“Why did it explode?” he thought. The pill furnaces provided to Inner Sect disciples were all standard issue, exactly the same as the ones in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. Generally speaking, even if the spirit medicine was concocted incorrectly, they wouldn’t just explode.

And yet, that was exactly what had just happened. It had even activated the cave’s defensive spell formations.

After pondering the matter at length, he couldn’t come up with an explanation. Sighing, he went back to cultivating the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture for a few days. By this point, his cultivation was only a sliver away from a breakthrough.

However, he wasn’t in any hurry. After finishing his cultivation, he consumed some spirit medicine to replenish his vital energy, then set to work on the Undying Live Forever Technique. The silver light which rose up from his skin was now so dark that it bordered on golden.

That afternoon, Bai Xiaochun went on to the next task at hand. Standing there in his immortal’s cave, he slowly lifted his hands up into the air as he practiced the Waterswamp Kingdom mnemonic. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he

opened his eyes and let out a powerful shout.

An intense energy exploded out from inside him, causing everything around him to suddenly change. A field of water vapor appeared, which lasted for only a single breath of time before vanishing.

Bai Xiaochun sagged in place, wiping the sweat from his brow. Despite practicing the Waterswamp Kingdom every day since he'd acquired it, that was all that he could accomplish.

"I need to keep working harder!" he thought. After resting for a moment, he ended his daily cultivation routine and once again pondered the problem of the exploding pill furnace. During the past half a year of practice, he had succeeded with a few tier-3 spirit medicines, but for the most part, his attempts had ended in failure.

He sat there in frustration for some time before finally coming up with a theory.

"Maybe after the medicinal strength intensified to a certain point, it became unstable, which caused the explosion?" Immediately afterward, he hurried out and exchanged some merit points for another pill furnace, then went back to concocting.

Gradually, word spread that the explosion earlier had come from Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave. Strange expressions appeared on the faces of the disciples. Although they weren't sure exactly what had caused the explosion, at least they now knew Bai Xiaochun was

the cause.

Then.... A few days later, Bai Xiaochun was there in his medicine concocting workstation, completely and utterly focused on controlling the spirit medicine inside the pill furnace. Unfortunately, tier-3 spirit medicines were extremely difficult to work with. Most other people, with enough experience and luck, would succeed three times out of ten and consider it a high rate of success. But Bai Xiaochun wanted things to be perfect. He wouldn't rest until he'd solved each and every problem. Because he wanted even the tiniest details to be perfect, it meant he had to test all those details multiple times before finally resolving every issue.

This time, his eyes went wide as he realized that he was losing control of the spirit medicine. Then the pill furnace began to issue cracking sounds. Bai Xiaochun gasped, and two wings suddenly appeared behind him as he bolted out of the medicine concocting workshop.

Moments after he emerged, a huge explosion shook the immortal's cave.

Fragrant Cloud Peak was once again thrown into an uproar for some time before everyone managed to calm down. Three days later, Bai Xiaochun ran screaming out of his medicine concocting workstation, and a third shocking explosion ripped through the air.

After seven days, he emerged yet again, flustered, fleeing at top speed as a fourth deafening explosion nearly destroyed his medicine concocting workstation.

Fragrant Cloud Peak was in utter chaos, and countless disciples' eyes were completely bloodshot. After inquiries were made, people learned that Bai Xiaochun was concocting medicine. However, no one could figure out exactly why such huge explosions would be occurring.

“I asked the Spirit Medicine Pharmacy, and they said that he recently purchased eight pill furnaces!”

“That sound must be an exploding pill furnace. Just what is Bai Xiaochun concocting? Dammit! Isn't he worried about blowing himself up!?” Anger was building, and yet the explosions... weren't over. They continued.

Over the course of the following month, seven explosions rocked Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, each one more intense than the last. The final explosion actually caused all of Fragrant Cloud Peak to tremble, and Bai Xiaochun's entire immortal's cave was nearly destroyed.

As Bai Xiaochun fled outside, trembling in fear, the Outer and Inner Sect disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak were driven to near madness. During the past month, none of them had been able to safely focus on practicing cultivation. Constantly being startled by the explosions had left them jumpy with fear. Now, they were thoroughly distracted, their eyes bloodshot as they struggled to control their anger.

Apparently, even sound-muffling spell formations couldn't stop

the sound of the explosions. The disciples' rage grew, and even the elders were shocked and could hardly believe what Bai Xiaochun was doing.

“What is Bai Xiaochun concocting to cause the pill furnaces to explode like that? What... what medicine is he working on?!”

Things didn't end. Over the next month, the frequency of the explosions increased. More than a dozen occurred, almost every other day. Eventually, the Fragrant Cloud Peak disciples couldn't take it any longer, and stormed to Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave en masse to vent their fury.

Feeling very wronged, Bai Xiaochun hurried out to offer an explanation. When he saw a mob of over a thousand disciples, his face paled a bit, and eventually he resorted to slapping his chest and guaranteeing that there would be no more explosions. Only then did the crowd begin to calm down.

After seeing everyone off, Bai Xiaochun went back into his immortal's cave, scowling the entire time. Looking over his mostly-destroyed medicine concocting workstation, he sighed, pulled out another pill furnace, and looked at it blankly.

A few days later, he slapped his thigh, and his eyes began to shine.

“Right! It's definitely because I didn't pre-heat the pill furnace properly!” Excited, he started concocting again.... Three days later, in the middle of the night, everyone on Fragrant Cloud Peak...

heard a massive explosion.

One Inner Sect disciple was so badly frightened that he almost fainted. Hair in complete disarray, he screamed, “Bai Xiaochun!! I don’t care if you’re Chosen, I’m going to beat you black and blue!”

He wasn’t the only one. Soon, all of the Inner Sect disciples had emerged from their immortal’s caves, even the exhausted Zhou Xinqi. Bai Xiaochun hurried out, smiling apologetically as he guaranteed that it wouldn’t happen again. The gathered disciples calmed down a bit in response. They couldn’t find any fault with his attitude, and as such, had no other recourse. If he had been even a bit defiant, they definitely would have given him a good thrashing. But at the moment... they could only grit their teeth and accept his promise.

Exhausted, Bai Xiaochun returned to his immortal’s cave, wishing to cry but finding no tears. He was coming to find that it was a difficult thing to pursue his dreams.

“I’m not the kind of person who gives up!” he thought. Gritting his teeth, he produced another pill furnace, which he studied for half a month straight. Finally, after analyzing all aspects of the situation, he was sure that he had identified the problem.

“Earthflame. It’s definitely the Earthflame!” Eyes bloodshot, he once again began to concoct.... Five days later at dawn, an explosion could be heard that was so loud it startled Li Qinghou, and could even be heard on Violet Cauldron Peak and Green Crest Peak.

The Inner Sect disciples who lived near Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave were dumbstruck, especially Zhou Xinqi. All of them felt like they were going crazy. Elder Zhou's birds let out high-pitched shrieks, and were so frightened that their feathers fell out. The spirit tail chickens were trembling and frothing at the mouth, and numerous Inner Sect disciples struggled to remain conscious....

All of the spell formations in Bai Xiaochun's cave activated as the Earthflame erupted, and even Fragrant Cloud Peak's grand spell formation was affected. When Bai Xiaochun crawled out of the rubble, he was pitch black, and yet clearly excited. He was now sure that he had finally found the source of the problem.

“It wasn't the Earthflame, it was the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression! They cause an unforeseeable variable. Tier-3 spirit medicines... must be concocted with mutual augmentation and suppression in mind!”

Everyone on Fragrant Cloud Peak, from the elders to the Outer Sect disciples, rushed over toward Bai Xiaochun's cave, enraged, rocks in hand to pelt him if necessary. When faced with such a furious mob, Bai Xiaochun vigorously slapped his chest.

“I guarantee–” However, before he could finish, the crowd began to hurl their rocks. After all, fighting with magic against a fellow sect member was prohibited, but throwing rocks wasn't....

“Guarantee your ass!” Countless rocks closed in, fueled by

burning rage.



# Chapter 105: Massive Animal Jailbreak!

---

Seeing the sky obscured by rocks struck fear into Bai Xiaochun's heart. He dove back into his immortal's cave and quickly activated the spell formation, looking like he was about to cry. He knew that he had aroused public fury, but truly felt wronged; he hadn't done it on purpose!

"I guarantee that this is the last time!" he blurted. "I'm absolutely certain!"

After the mob vented some of their anger, Bai Xiaochun continued to offer explanations, and eventually, the people left.

Sighing wistfully, Bai Xiaochun cleared the rubble from his immortal's cave and then returned to his medicine concocting workstation. There he sat, pondering everything that had occurred. Finally, he gritted his teeth and gingerly produced another pill furnace. Based on his most recent analysis, he once again began to concoct medicine.

This time, he focused heavily on the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression. A few days later, a fragrant aroma filled the air, and Bai Xiaochun's eyes brimmed with tears of excitement. He let out a whoop of delight at having finally solved the problem of the exploding pill furnaces. Furthermore, he'd gained a deeper understanding of the variables which can occur because of mutual augmentation and suppression.

"I'm just around the corner from mastering tier-3 spirit

medicines!” Spirits soaring, he spent the next several days completely lost in his medicine concocting.

Gradually, the disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak realized that there were no more explosions. They sighed with relief, and as the days passed, the mountain slowly returned to normal.

And yet... Bai Xiaochun had come to find that although he'd solved the problem of the explosions, his success rate with tier-3 spirit medicine was still fairly low. Furthermore, he ended up concocting quite a few strange pills.

When such strange pills emerged from the pill furnace, he would look at them suspiciously. Although he knew that they surely contained wondrous secrets, it was hard to say whether they were as miraculous as his Aphrodisiac Pill.

“I need to test them out to see what they do....” he murmured to himself. Emerging from his immortal's cave, he headed down to the market and bought some random animals. He even spent some merit points to get some from the sect.

Back in his immortal's cave, he prepared, for the second time in his life, to perform some animal testing. He even produced a blank jade slip to record the data.

After all the preparations were complete, he took a deep breath and pulled out a rabbit, then selected a black pill from his collection of strange pills.

The rabbit sniffed it, then gobbled it up. A moment later, it began to tremble. Then its legs twitched, and it flopped over and lay unmoving on the ground.

“Dead?” Bai Xiaochun thought, eyes going wide. After looking closer, he breathed a sigh of relief when he realized that the rabbit wasn’t dead, but rather, had simply fallen unconscious because of the rush of spiritual energy from the powerful medicinal pill.

A few hours later, it woke up. This time, it stood up on two legs, almost like a person, and stared fixedly at Bai Xiaochun.

“Eee?” Bai Xiaochun said. Moments later, the rabbit made the same sound, startling Bai Xiaochun. “You can talk?”

Looking startled, the rabbit said, “You can talk?”

Bai Xiaochun immediately got very excited, and began to walk around the rabbit to examine it. In turn, the rabbit got excited and began to walk around Bai Xiaochun. A strange scene was now playing out in the immortal’s cave.

Finally, Bai Xiaochun began to laugh heartily.

“Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!”

The rabbit laughed heartily and repeated the exact same words he had just spoken. A quizzical look on his face, Bai Xiaochun

opened the door of one of the side rooms and tossed the rabbit inside.

“Whatever. You’re obviously not intelligent. If you make some cultivation advancement, don’t forget to come back and thank me in the future. I’ll put you in here for now, and in a few days I’ll set you free outside the sect.”

After putting the rabbit in the other room, Bai Xiaochun paid it no further heed as he proceeded with his testing. The next subject was a monkey, for which he selected a yellow medicinal pill. At first, the monkey pretended not to see it, but eventually got interested and grabbed the pill up. After sniffing it, it crushed some of the pill, and then popped the pill and the fragments into its mouth and swallowed it down.

Afterward, nothing much happened except that an odd wind rose up out of nowhere, which quickly faded away. Bai Xiaochun looked curiously at the monkey, which was simply sitting there with a vacant expression on its face. Unsure if anything had occurred, Bai Xiaochun sighed and put the monkey into the same room as the rabbit.

A few days later, one of the tests he performed was on a group of rabbits. After eating the medicinal pills, their eyes turned red, and they began to howl and leap up to nibble Bai Xiaochun’s legs.

Shocked, he made a notation in his records, then threw them into a side room. There, they started biting each other, although they drew no blood.

There was also a handful of ducks. After consuming the strange medicinal pills, they trembled, and suddenly, their wings grew larger, and they began to fly around inside the immortal's cave, looking particularly elegant. Bai Xiaochun stared in shock, and at the same time, his excitement regarding his strange pills grew.

Time flowed by. During the following half month, Bai Xiaochun performed tests with his strange pills, keeping meticulous records of everything. Occasionally, his wild laughter would ring out from within the immortal's cave.

A few days later, when he fed some pills to some ordinary chickens, they rapidly grew larger until they were the size of elephants. Bai Xiaochun's understanding of the Dao of medicine was growing more profound. Shaking with excitement, he continued his experiments.

Gradually, the rooms he had set aside for the animal subjects included quite a variety of strange beasts. There was a group of toads with eyes all over their bodies. Those eyes would all blink every time the toads croaked.

There was a tiger that Bai Xiaochun had bought for a handful of spirit stones. After consuming one of his pills, it grew eight more heads, giving it a total of nine. When it roared with all of its heads, the sound was very impressive.

There was also a group of ordinary pigeons who experienced no major change other than constantly relieving themselves as they

flew along....

Time passed, the experiments continued, and the bizarre and extraordinary results of the strange pills became more evident. There was a group of monkeys who, after eating some strange pills, began to twitch constantly.

There was a bunch of cats who let out burps as loud as thunder. Bai Xiaochun was struck with awe, and couldn't help but wonder exactly how he had concocted all of these strange pills. The most exaggerated situation was the flock of geese. After eating the medicinal pills, their eyes turned pure white. Although they looked a bit sickly, they turned out to be extremely loyal, and even took to watching over Bai Xiaochun's cave as if they were guarding it.

Toward the end, he gave the hot spring fish some pills to eat. They immediately went crazy, struggling with each other to leap out of the water. There, they grew legs and began to walk around the immortal's cave.

After examining the fish, he threw them into another side room. By this point, the side rooms were filling up, and his immortal's cave was turning into a bizarre menagerie.

There was a monkey who simply sat in place, chin resting in its palm, apparently lost in thought. There was the group of spasmodically twitching monkeys. The red-eyed rabbits were currently play fighting with the elephant-sized chickens....

Off to the side were the toads who blinked and croaked noisily.

Finally, there was the rabbit, who was practicing all sorts of poses. Occasionally it would say, “Eee? You can talk? Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!” It was only able to recite those three passages.

Up in the air, ducks flew about gracefully. The pigeons also flapped about, excrement plopping down below them wherever they went.... The nine-headed tiger was covered in it, and roared constantly. Off to the side were the legged fish, who were constantly on the run from the burping cats....

At the door were the large geese, who eyed everything coldly, as though they were guarding against something.

Bai Xiaochun stared around at everything, musing that he had only tested a small portion of his strange pills. Unfortunately, he had no more animals to test them on.

“The Dao of medicine is truly miraculous...” he murmured. With that, he decided that he definitely had to test out all of his strange pills. Therefore, he left the immortal’s cave to go purchase more animals to experiment with.

However, almost as soon as he left, his second test subject, the thoughtful monkey who had done nothing except stare off into space, suddenly looked up thoughtfully. Then it turned its gaze to the door in the side room, and its eyes seemed just as intelligent as a person’s! Suddenly, it burst into motion, running over... to open the door!

Next, the main gate of the immortal's cave... was flung wide open!

The sun shone outside as the thoughtful monkey leaped out into the open. The other animals stared in shock, but a moment later, all of them... made their escape.

By chance, Zhou Xinqi happened to be walking out of her immortal's cave at that same moment. She saw a flock of quacking ducks flying gracefully out into the open, and her jaw dropped. She had long since mastered all five volumes of spirit creatures, but she had never seen anything like these flying ducks.

“What are those things?” she murmured. Next, she was shocked to see several elephant-sized chickens racing out. Perched atop one of them was a rabbit.

“Eee? You can talk? Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!”

Zhou Xinqi stood there blinking in shock, wondering if she was hallucinating.



# Chapter 106: Crazy Rabbit!

---

Around that time, Xu Baocai and some other Outer Sect disciples were in the middle of their journeyman apothecary promotion test. Elder Xu was off to the side, a somber look on his face as he presided over the occasion. Suddenly, a flock of pigeons appeared, and plopping sounds began to echo out as... endless amounts of bird excrement showered down. It was like rain, covering Xu Baocai, the other test-takers, and the audience. Even Elder Xu's hair was peppered with excrement....

Everyone looked up in shock as the flock of pigeons flew off into the distance, excrement showering down below them....

“Those pigeons... I've never seen them before....”

“Dammit! What's going on? I can't believe... I can't believe they're crapping non-stop!!” The disciples were in an uproar, and Elder Xu stood there blankly for a moment before his face began to twitch.

Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo stood on a mountain path, glowering at each other.

The two of them had been at odds since they were servants, and their conflict was only growing more intense. Usually they just glared at each other, but now things were getting more serious. “Today, we're finally going to resolve our–”

However, before the words could be spoken completely, a group

of legged fish ran by, kicking up a cloud of dust as they did.

Before Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo could react, a group of cats approached at top speed, emitting thunderous burps as they ran after the fish. Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo gasped in shock, their hostilities completely forgotten.

“Did... did we just see a bunch of legged fish?” Zhao Yiduo blurted, wondering if he was seeing things.

“Those cats’ burps were as loud as thunder....” Chen Zi'ang said, eyes wide.

Further down the mountain, cries of alarm rose up from numerous Outer Sect disciples as a horde of red-eyed rabbits began to nibble at their legs. Although the rabbits were relatively easy to grab, the chattering sounds of their biting teeth were fear-inspiring.

Most shocking of all was one particular rabbit which sat on the back of an elephant-sized chicken.

“Eee? You can talk? Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!”

Everyone on Fragrant Cloud Peak was going crazy.... Countless people heard the words spoken by the rabbit, and quickly realized that the instigator of the entire affair was none other than Bai

Xiaochun!

In the Inner Sect district, a group of toads hopped along. Any Inner Sect disciple who caught sight of them would gasp in shock. The sight of such eye-covered toads was enough to terrify anyone.

There was even a nine-headed tiger running amok. Fragrant Cloud Peak was thrown into complete chaos.

And there was one particular monkey... which had climbed all the way up to the roof of Li Qinghou's residence. There it sat, on the highest point of Fragrant Cloud Peak, chin rested in its palm, looking on thoughtfully as Xu Meixiang made her way off into the distance, having just finished chatting with Li Qinghou....

Li Qinghou's face was ashen as he stood there outside his residence, looking up at the monkey. He was just about to start yelling when, all of a sudden, plopping sounds could be heard, and a rain of bird excrement descended. Li Qinghou's jaw dropped.

It had been quite some time... since there had been a commotion on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Outer and Inner Sect disciples alike were all in an uproar. For the most part, the animals didn't really affect them. However, no one could figure out how such tiny pigeons could unleash such a torrent of bird excrement....

Gradually, the rabbit, which originally could only recite three passages, learned to speak some more. Gradually, it also learned how to cry out at the top of its lungs.

“Heavens! What’s that?!”

“Did you see that? That rabbit can talk!”

“This is definitely the handiwork of Bai Xiaochun!”

“Keep this on the down low, but yesterday I saw Elder Zhou go into a room with those phoenixes of his. Afterward, I heard some really strange noises....

“Elder Sister Zhou Xinqi, Elder Sister Du Lingfei, I don’t care if Bai Xiaochun tries to stop me, the two of you will definitely end up with me, Xu Baocai!”

“Elder Brother Hou Yunfei, you’re so naughty! What are you doing...? Uh... what’s that? Why are those monkeys twitching like that?!”

“Junior Sister Meixiang, I, Li Qinghou, am not fickle in love. After I break through into the Gold Core stage, I’ll definitely take you as my Daoist partner!”

“Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!”

As the rabbit ran to and fro, its repertoire of passages grew. It had very sensitive ears, and would repeat anything it heard. Many people were affected, much to their chagrin. The sharp-eared rabbit soon began to spread what had been well-kept secrets, even

naming names.

Some of the stories the rabbit spread were almost impossible to believe. That was especially true of the one about Li Qinghou.... It was something the likes of which had never been talked about publicly, and many people were left completely shocked, even many elders.

Xu Baocai was stunned, Hou Yunfei's eyes went wide, and Li Qinghou began to tremble in rage.

Right about then, Bai Xiaochun was returning from the market, numerous small animals in tow, brimming with anticipation regarding his next set of experiments. However, as soon as he stepped onto Fragrant Cloud Peak, bird excrement rained down. Jumping to the side, he looked up with a frown to see a flock of pigeons flying by.

“Eee? Why do they look so familiar...?” Suddenly, a rustling sound could be heard from the nearby bushes, and a school of legged fish burst out. Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped as he watched a bunch of burping cats fly out after the fish. Moments later, his eyes went wide as a troupe of twitching monkeys ran by, frothing at the mouth as they sped along.

Bai Xiaochun began to tremble, and all the hair on his body stood on end.

“This... this is... impossible!” He quickly pulled out the Golden Crow Sword and flew up into the air. Wings sprouted out behind

him as he shot up the mountain at top speed.

As he flew along, he saw animals everywhere. He also got quite a few odd stares from the people he passed. By the time he reached his immortal's cave, his heart was pounding. Then he saw that the door was open, and the cave was completely empty except for the geese standing guard.

“How did they get out?!” he thought, standing there in a daze. It didn't seem possible. Suddenly, he looked to the side to see a rabbit running along, spewing a whole bunch of words that ended with....

“Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!”

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and at the same time, the rabbit caught sight of him, and its eyes went wide too. It immediately turned tail and fled. Well aware that a disaster was underway, Bai Xiaochun lunged at the rabbit. Unfortunately, the rabbit's speed was explosive, and in the blink of an eye, not even its shadow could be seen. Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped. And that was when he heard the roaring voice of Li Qinghou.

“Bai Xiaochun! Get this mess cleaned up immediately! If I see one animal or one speck of bird crap, you're going directly to 10,000 Snakes Valley! And make that damned rabbit shut up!!”

It didn't matter that Bai Xiaochun had taken first place in the Chosen battles, or that he had made such incredible progress with his Undying Silver Skin. As soon as he heard '10,000 Snakes

Valley', he shivered. The mere thought of the place filled him with fear. Looking like he was about to cry, he subconsciously glanced further up the mountain, whereupon his eyes went wide.

Sitting there on the roof of Li Qinghou's residence was a monkey, its chin resting on its palm, apparently lost in thought.

On the verge of tears, Bai Xiaochun raced up the mountain toward the monkey. As he closed in, the monkey looked over, a seemingly emotional look in its eyes, as if it were thinking about how wonderful it had been to enjoy freedom. Although Bai Xiaochun was a bit shocked, he quickly grabbed the monkey and threw it into his bag of holding.

With that, he raced off nervously to scour the rest of Fragrant Cloud Peak. Wherever he went, the disciples looked at him with strange expressions. The next beast he caught was the nine-headed tiger, and after that, the eye-covered toads.

Soon he had the elephant-sized chickens, and then the legged fish. Not long after that, the burping cats were in custody. The ducks were the easiest of all to apprehend.

It was nearing the end of the day by the time he rounded up the twitching monkeys and threw them into his bag of holding. The hardest to catch were the defecating pigeons, which took a lot of effort. By the time he caught the last one, it was late at night. After taking stock, he realized that the only animal left was the talking rabbit.

Unfortunately, despite much searching, Bai Xiaochun couldn't find it. The rabbit was an expert at hiding.

“Ai.” Sighing, he looked at the bird excrement covering Fragrant Cloud Peak and got to work cleaning it up. It took the whole night. By the time he returned to his immortal's cave, exhausted, it was dawn.

As the sun rose, the disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak emerged to find the mountain peak squeaky clean. When they thought back to the events of the previous day, they suddenly had a much deeper understanding of Bai Xiaochun's medicinal pills. Of course, those disciples who had been showered with bird excrement were furious about the matter, but there was little they could do. After all, they knew Bai Xiaochun hadn't done any of it on purpose.

Even still, the hijinks he caused were happening over and over again. As such, terror regarding Bai Xiaochun was growing in the hearts of all.

Bai Xiaochun slept until afternoon. Upon waking up, he decided that he didn't dare perform any more strange pill experiments. Leaving the sect, he went far out into the wilderness, where he found a safe place to release all of the animals from his bag of holding.

“You're all free now....” he said with a bitter smile.

The animals who hadn't eaten any of his medicinal pills quickly scurried away. However, the other animals simply stood there



looking at Bai Xiaochun. He looked back at them for a moment before producing some more medicinal pills from his bag of holding.

“If you eat some of these pills, maybe you can start building up your own cultivation. Be good, alright? You really caused me a lot of trouble yesterday.” He gave a medicinal pill to each animal, then waved and turned to leave. It was at that point that nine-headed tiger let out a powerful roar.

Bai Xiaochun looked over his shoulder to find the nine-headed tiger looking at him with a strange gleam in its eyes, as if it were committing his features to memory. With that, it turned and sped off into the distance.

All the other animals had similar reactions as the tiger, including the ducks, the pigeons, the walking fish, the burping cats, the guardian geese, the eye-covered toads, and the twitching monkeys. With a final look at Bai Xiaochun, they scattered.

The last to leave was the thoughtful monkey, which looked at Bai Xiaochun with what seemed to be a gleam of intelligence. For some reason, Bai Xiaochun felt that there was something profound about that monkey.

After giving Bai Xiaochun a very deep look, it turned and headed off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun was left gaping. For some reason, he'd gotten the feeling that the monkey was just as intelligent as a human. The

profound look in its eyes had been clear.

Thoughtfully pulling out a jade slip, he found the information about the pill he'd fed to that monkey.

“There's something about that pill... that I don't understand!” He looked thoughtfully at the departing animals, wishing them well. Their lives had changed because of him, and he truly hoped that they would be happy.

Eventually, wings sprouted from Bai Xiaochun's back, and he shot back toward the sect.

# Chapter 107: Lightning Detox Grand Magic

---

After returning to Fragrant Cloud Peak, Bai Xiaochun started getting a bit emotional. He still had a lot of strange pills in his bag of holding, but he didn't dare to test any of them out. When he walked along the mountain paths of the sect, the other disciples would either give him odd looks, or stare at him with hatred and anger.

“Why is it so hard to pursue my dreams?” he thought. “It's not like it's my fault. Uncle Li is the one who told me to focus on my research....” Sighing, he walked along until he reached his immortal's cave, where he sat staring off into space.

Earlier that year, Bai Xiaochun had frequently gone to Li Qinghou to ask questions about problems that popped up in his medicine concocting. Li Qinghou was often surprised by the questions. The depths to which Bai Xiaochun was delving in the Dao of medicine were unusual for ordinary apothecaries.

When combined with Bai Xiaochun's incredible achievements with the stone steles, Li Qinghou couldn't help but be filled with anticipation. However, every person had a different understanding of the Dao of medicine, so Li Qinghou wouldn't answer any of Bai Xiaochun's questions. Instead, he encouraged him to do his own tests. Only by doing so would he be able to develop a Dao of medicine that was his own. If he simply followed along with the crowd, he would never be able to make a name for himself as a grandmaster of the Dao of medicine. Besides, the origins of most pill formulas were the results of generations upon generations of experimentation.

“No. My dreams haven’t changed. What Uncle Li said was right. The only things which truly belong to you are the things you get on your own. Even if it gets harder, I still won’t give up!” Gritting his teeth, he decided that even if he couldn’t test out the strange pills he’d made, he could still stay devoted to the Dao of medicine.

“I’m definitely going to become an amazing master apothecary!” Taking a deep breath, he headed back to his medicine concocting workstation, where he devoted himself completely to pill concocting.

Time passed. In the blink of an eye, several months had gone by. Bai Xiaochun was getting a lot more confident and skilled when it came to tier-3 spirit medicine. He solved one problem after another, and soon found that tier-3 spirit medicine weren’t really that difficult after all.

However...an even bigger problem was looming.

Despite his best efforts, and despite the fact that he was getting much more proficient with tier-3 spirit medicines, it was very difficult to raise his success rate. Generally speaking, out of ten batches of pills, five would succeed. Of the other five, one would produce an unidentifiable strange pill, and four would be so impure as to be considered toxic.

He was starting to go a bit crazy. Even spirit enhancement did nothing to the toxic pills. Only low-grade pills could be raised to a higher level by spirit enhancement.

Although he wasn't aware of it, his focus on medicine concocting had reached an obsessive-compulsive level. Unless he could reach the perfection he sought, he would feel uneasy.

“Impurities! How am I supposed to get rid of those impurities!?” His eyes were completely bloodshot as he stared down at his large collection of toxic pills. After some more thought, he considered going to ask Li Qinghou. But when he thought about how Li Qinghou had encouraged him to do his own observation and experimentation, he gritted his teeth and devoted himself even more madly to solving the problem.

Days went by. Eventually, people began to take note that Bai Xiaochun had grown quiet again. There were no explosions, and no animals running around. Everything was calm, although for some people, the newfound quiet was difficult to get used to.

Unfortunately, good things never last forever.... A month later, in the middle of the night, Bai Xiaochun sat in front of his pill furnace, hair disheveled, madly performing incantation gestures to control the Earthflame. As he fed more medicinal plants into the furnace, his eyes grew more and more bloodshot.

“This is it. Almost done. I'm definitely going to solve all the problems this time. This is what I call creativity! I added Thunder God Vine, Lightning Rod Flower, Withertree Rose and Yin Yang Thistle, and invented a new technique. This is definitely going to be able to cleanse the impurities. It's definitely going to work. This is Bai Xiaochun's one and only... Lightning Detox Grand Magic!” As his excitement built, the pill furnace began to tremble, and a

medicinal aroma wafted out. Outside, the moon hung high in the cloudless night sky above Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Suddenly, a cloud layer formed, and a bolt of lightning descended toward Fragrant Cloud Peak. When it slammed into Bai Xiaochun's cave, the cave's spell formation trembled, and some of the lightning even pierced the spell formation and the stone of his immortal's cave to land on the pill furnace.

Lightning crackled inside the immortal's cave, accompanied by Bai Xiaochun's wild laughter. After the lightning faded away, he rushed excitedly over to the pill furnace.

Unfortunately, the only thing that remained inside was some soot and a bit of swirling smoke.

"Too much Lightning Rod Flower!" he thought, tugging at his disheveled hair and looking every bit the mad scientist. With that, he produced more medicinal plants and began to prepare the ingredients.

Quite a few Fragrant Cloud Peak disciples had seen the lightning, and had noticed that it appeared to have fallen on Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave.

"So... even god is getting tired of Bai Xiaochun?"

"That must be it. The heavens do have eyes! Lightning is being sent to put an end to him...."

People had various ideas about what was happening, with many people rejoicing in Bai Xiaochun's apparent misfortune. Some of the elders even noticed the lightning, and were quite surprised.

“Not even Peak Lord Li attracts thunder and lightning when concocts medicine. According to the legends, only tier-7 spirit medicines and higher provoke Tribulation Lightning. Just what is Bai Xiaochun doing?”

Three days later in the afternoon, laughter rang out from within Bai Xiaochun's cave. Staring at the pill furnace, his hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture. Spiritual power erupted, and Earthflame raged. With a roar, Bai Xiaochun slapped both hands down onto the surface of the pill furnace.

“Lightning Detox Grand Magic!”

As the pill furnace rumbled, clouds gathered above the summit of Fragrant Cloud Peak, and a single bolt of lightning shot down toward Bai Xiaochun's cave.

This time, large numbers of disciples saw the shocking sight. Deafening thunder boomed as the lightning bolt slammed into his immortal's cave.

Inside, Bai Xiaochun excitedly inspected the pill furnace, only to find that it contained no pill, only some medicinal dregs and a bit of smoke. After taking a whiff, his head spun and his vision swam. Taking a few steps back, he even realized that a bit of froth had

seeped out of the edges of his mouth.

“Too much Thunder God Vine...” he murmured. With that, he flopped down unconscious. Three days later he woke up, cleaned his face, and consumed a few medicinal pills. After clearing his head, he went back to concocting.

In the following days, more and more thunder boomed over Fragrant Cloud Peak. As the disciples witnessed lightning striking Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave with such frequency, they were struck speechless. Even the elders were shocked.

They began to suspect... that Bai Xiaochun really would be struck dead eventually.

Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun feared death so much, he was so bedeviled by his desire to concoct medicine that he completely forgot about the concept of death. He was fully immersed in the Dao of medicine, constantly adjusting the medicine formula he was working with, continually trying to perfect his Lightning Detox Grand Magic.

“Lightning Detox Grand Magic!”

BOOM!

“Dammit! Lightning Detox Grand Magic!”

BOOM!



By this point, the cave's defensive spell formations had been rendered entirely useless, and anyone within earshot could hear Bai Xiaochun yelling at the top of his lungs. Gradually, word spread that the thunder and lightning had come because Bai Xiaochun was working on a method to detoxify spirit medicines.

This piqued the attention of quite a few sect elders, and they began to observe even more closely. Although the lightning continued to fall, strangely, nobody did anything to interfere.

Even Li Qinghou approved of Bai Xiaochun's attempt at creativity, and would occasionally observe.

Unfortunately... good things never last forever. Even after a hundred attempts, Bai Xiaochun still couldn't find the perfect ingredient ratio. He even began to add other medicinal plants, hoping that some of them would have an effect. One evening, Bai Xiaochun let out a roar, and lightning danced in the sky above. This time, it wasn't a single bolt that fell down, it was ten.

Strangely, only one lightning bolt struck Bai Xiaochun's area. The rest happened to fall in other locations on Fragrant Cloud Peak

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

Considering how many bolts of lightning fell, it was no surprise that miserable shrieks could be heard all over the mountain. Fragrant Cloud Peak was once again thrown into a commotion. Zhou Xinqi's immortal's cave was struck, but thankfully the spell

formation shielded it from damage. Zhou Xinqi glared angrily over in the direction of Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, barely able to hold back from cursing him aloud.

Li Qinghou and the Fragrant Cloud Peak elders placated the disciples; after all, they couldn't help but approve of Bai Xiaochun's devotion to the Dao of medicine.

However... Bai Xiaochun had truly gone mad. Two hours later, clouds filled the sky, and this time, nearly a hundred lightning bolts descended onto Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Booms rang out in all directions, and even more disciples looked up into the sky, shocked to the core. People ran back into their residences, unwilling to even set foot outside. Li Qinghou and the elders were struck speechless.

The sight of nearly a hundred lightning bolts crashing down into various areas of Fragrant Cloud Peak was completely shocking. Perhaps because Zhou Xinqi's immortal's cave was so close to Bai Xiaochun's, it ended up being struck by about six or seven of them. Her entire immortal's cave shook violently, and the spell formation shield distorted visibly.

Things weren't over, though. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, everyone was thrown into a commotion again as more clouds appeared in the sky. This time, hundreds of lightning bolts could be seen forming.

When they slammed down onto Fragrant Cloud Peak, all of the

immortal's caves trembled, and many other areas were badly damaged. Bai Xiaochun's cave was almost destroyed.

Even more shocking... Zhou Xinqi's cave attracted over fifty bolts of lightning. They slammed into the cave over and over again like Heavenly Tribulation, breaking open the cave itself until Zhou Xinqi tumbled out.

Her face pale, she fled off into the distance. Looking back at the flattened rubble that had been her immortal's cave, she screamed, "Bai Xiaochun!!"

There were a few other Inner Sect disciples who met similar fates. Their immortal's caves destroyed, they stormed over toward Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, vowing to settle accounts immediately, no matter what happened.... However, in that same moment, clouds roiled up above, even thicker than before, and an intense pressure weighed down on everything below. Zhou Xinqi's heart began to pound, and her face fell. The disciples who had come to pick a fight with Bai Xiaochun gasped and began to shake visibly.

Even the peak lords of Violet Cauldron Peak and Green Crest Peak noticed the clouds, and their eyes went wide. Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong saw it from afar, and his scalp began to tingle.

Shockingly, over a thousand lightning bolts could be seen within the clouds!!

"Th-that... that will destroy Fragrant Cloud Peak!!"

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Heavens! What is he doing over there? I can’t believe... I can’t believe there are so many lightning bolts!!”

“We’re under attack! We’re under attack!!” Countless cries of shock and alarm rose up in and around Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Everyone from Outer to Inner Sect disciples were trembling as an intense fear filled them.

Bai Xiaochun had tuned everything out, and didn’t even realize what was happening. Eyes crimson, he stared at the pill furnace for a moment, then bellowed and slapped it with both hands.

“Lightning Detox Grand Magic!”

BOOM!

# Chapter 108: Big Fatty Zhang, Loyal Friend

---

Even Li Qinghou gasped in response to what was happening. Having no time to actually dispel the lightning, he quickly performed an incantation gesture and waved his finger toward the sky. In response, a resplendent, multi-colored shield sprang into existence above Fragrant Cloud Peak.

At the same time, the more than one thousand lightning bolts began to descend from the clouds. Their target was Fragrant Cloud Peak, but the shield blocked their progress. Massive rumbling sounds echoed out, and ripples spread out across the shield as it began to neutralize the lightning bolts.

After thirty breaths of time, the final lightning bolt was neutralized, and the multi-colored shield faded away. The disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak were left trembling, the intense feeling of danger still lingering in their hearts. After a moment, they turned with bloodshot eyes to look in the direction of Bai Xiaochun's cave.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” countless disciples howled. It was hard to say who made the first move, but soon, a huge mob was rushing toward his immortal's cave. Elders joined the crowd, and even Li Qinghou flew in the same direction in a bright beam of light.

Within his crumbling immortal's cave, Bai Xiaochun was staring anxiously at the pill furnace, surprised that no lightning had come. Distracted, he suddenly realized that a deafening rumble could be heard outside, a sound which far exceeded the thunder from earlier.

Face draining of blood, he leaped to his feet, which was when he realized that the immortal's cave was on the verge of collapsing. Without another moment of hesitation, he ran outside. Moments later, the rumbling caused by countless running people pushed the immortal's cave past the point where it could hold together, and it collapsed.

Bai Xiaochun gaped mutely as the dust billowed out in all directions. That was when he realized that he was surrounded by a sea of furious Fragrant Cloud Peak disciples.

“That–”

Before he could begin his explanation, Zhou Xinqi's shrill cry pierced through the crowd. “Bai Xiaochun, you owe me an immortal's cave!!”

“Take Bai Xiaochun down!!”

“Dammit! You destroyed my immortal's cave!!”

“This is over the top! You weren't really concocting medicine, were you? First were the exploding pill furnaces, then all those weird animals, and finally this lightning. Y-y-you....” The crowd was completely enraged after having been tormented for two years in a row by Bai Xiaochun....

Bai Xiaochun felt more wronged than ever, considering that he really had been concocting pills. But then he noticed that Zhou

Xinqi's immortal's cave had been reduced to rubble, and suddenly felt an apologetic twinge in his heart.

Hou Xiaomei and Hou Yunfei were there in the crowd, but even they looked a bit helpless. Hou Xiaomei looked over at Bai Xiaochun, gritted her teeth, and was just about to start defending him to the crowd when Hou Yunfei fearfully clamped his hand over her mouth. It was a delicate moment, given how incensed the crowd was....

The disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak had all determined that letting Bai Xiaochun continue to concoct pills was unacceptable. As long as he was working at pill concocting, none of them would feel safe. When they thought about what had just occurred with the lightning, their shouts of fury grew even more intense.

Even as the crowd teetered on the version of losing control, the elders arrived, along with Li Qinghou. The disciples instantly quieted down, looking over woefully at Li Qinghou, clearly imploring him to take action.

Li Qinghou felt a huge headache coming on as he glared at Bai Xiaochun. Inciting lightning wasn't something that was incredibly difficult to do. Lightning was a yang element, so the only thing one had to do was provoke the proper transformations in plants and vegetation to create a yang aura, and thus attract lightning. However, even Li Qinghou was shocked by the sheer amount of lightning that had descended. Furthermore, Li Qinghou was also fairly certain that the exaggerated nature of the event had something to do with Fragrant Cloud Peak itself, which fundamentally possessed a yin aura.

Of course, the ordinary disciples wouldn't know that, and thus wouldn't know that Bai Xiaochun had only been one instigating factor.

Bai Xiaochun truly felt sorry for everyone, but also felt that he was getting the short end of the stick. Lacking any other options, he simply look anxiously at Li Qinghou.

With a slight shake of his head, Li Qinghou said, "Bai Xiaochun, from here on out, you're not allowed to concoct medicine on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Leave the mountain to do any concocting!"

The disciples started to get excited at Li Qinghou's brilliance.

"Yeah! Leave the mountain to do your concocting. Stay away from Fragrant Cloud Peak!"

"Go concoct medicine anywhere except near us!!"

"That's right! If you keep concocting medicine the way you have been, you're going to destroy Fragrant Cloud Peak! There's nothing strange about being asked to leave!!"

"But I—"

Before Bai Xiaochun could even begin to explain, Li Qinghou waved his sleeve. "The matter's been decided. Alright, everyone,



take your leave.”

Having finished speaking, Li Qinghou glared harshly at Bai Xiaochun, who immediately bit his tongue. He almost looked like he was going to cry. He truly felt horrible for disappointing Li Qinghou so badly.

The disciples in the crowd gave their final glares to Bai Xiaochun and then gradually dispersed. After everyone was gone, Li Qinghou stood there with Bai Xiaochun and let out a long sigh.

“Okay, explain your Lightning Detox Grand Magic to me.”

Bai Xiaochun looked up. Eyes glittering, he smiled broadly, and began to explain all of the details of his grand magic. Upon finishing, he stood there looking at Li Qinghou in anticipation.

Li Qinghou thought for a moment, and then nodded his head.

“The Dao of medicine is boundless, and no one could ever dare to say that it has a limit. Anything can happen during the journey upon that long path. The method you attempted has been tried and tested by others in the past, and they all failed. Lightning is powerful, and very difficult to control. Although some degree of success is possible, you can only go so far.

“You should wait until your cultivation base is a bit higher before trying again. At the very least, Foundation Establishment. Right now, any more attempts would be useless.” Seeing how obsessed

Bai Xiaochun was with the Dao of medicine, he did his best to explain things gently. After finishing, he patted Bai Xiaochun encouragingly on the shoulder, then turned to leave.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and sat down blankly. He really felt bad for causing so many immortal's caves to be destroyed. After thinking about what Li Qinghou had told him, he decided that, for the moment, he would stop working on the Lightning Detox Grand Magic.

"I need to take my research in a different direction," he thought. "I need to find another way to cleanse the impurities, something that doesn't use lightning, and that doesn't affect other people. But how do I do that?" After some more thought, he looked toward Violet Cauldron Peak, and his eyes began to shine.

Night hadn't fallen yet, so Bai Xiaochun straightened up a bit, then looked back at his destroyed immortal's cave, his eyes shining with determination.

"For the Dao of medicine, and for my eternal life pill!" With that, he walked down Fragrant Cloud Peak and headed toward Violet Cauldron Peak.

Bai Xiaochun was already very familiar with Violet Cauldron Peak. Back in the day, he and Big Fatty Zhang had covered nearly half the mountain in their search for spirit tail chickens. Later on, when he became so entranced with being called Sect Uncle, he had come to stroll around the mountain on numerous occasions.

Setting foot on Violet Cauldron Peak, he suddenly felt very calm. The disciples here weren't as irritable as those on Fragrant Cloud Peak, and in fact, many of them called out to him in greeting. Bai Xiaochun quickly began to sigh happily.

All smiles, he walked along the familiar path toward Big Fatty Zhang's residence. Big Fatty Zhang still hadn't reached the Inner Sect yet, so he still lived in the same place as before. It was evening by the time Bai Xiaochun reached the front gate.

When Big Fatty Zhang saw that it was Bai Xiaochun, he immediately broke into a wide smile. Once they were both inside his courtyard, Big Fatty Zhang proudly showed off his amazing spirit enhancement abilities, and explained that he was now renowned as a miraculous spirit enhancer here on Violet Cauldron Peak.

Bai Xiaochun immediately offered words of congratulations, which of course made Big Fatty Zhang even happier than before. Finally, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat.

"Eldest Brother, there's something I wanted to discuss with you."

"Say the word!" Big Fatty Zhang said, waving his hand in grandiose fashion.

"Could you help me find a place to stay on Violet Cauldron Peak? I want to do some medicine concocting here." With that, he looked pleadingly at Big Fatty Zhang.

“Concoct medicine? You’re already an Inner Sect disciple! Your immortal’s cave should have a medicine concocting workstation. Oh, by the way, I was in secluded meditation for a while. I heard Fragrant Cloud Peak had an incident with some lightning. What happened exactly?” Having been out of the public eye for most of the year so far, Big Fatty Zhang wasn’t too familiar with events beyond the borders of Violet Cauldron Peak. After all, Fragrant Cloud Peak was a different mountain altogether, so naturally he wouldn’t know as much.

Bai Xiaochun frowned bleakly. “Um... I was a bit careless in my pill concocting and attracted some lightning. My immortal’s cave was actually destroyed.”

“Huh?” Big Fatty Zhang said, his eyes going wide.

“Listen, Eldest Brother, you don’t have to worry,” Bai Xiaochun said, slapping his chest proudly. “I hereby swear that if I concoct medicine on Violet Cauldron Peak, I won’t attract any lightning. Seriously, I’m the kind of person who keeps my word. Besides, I can concoct tier-3 spirit medicine now. I’ll give you a whole bottle when I’m finished!”

When Big Fatty Zhang heard Bai Xiaochun talk about tier-3 spirit medicine, his heart began to thump. Tier-3 spirit medicines were available in the local market, but their prices were astronomical. Considering what Bai Xiaochun was offering him, there was no way he would refuse. Coupled with his pledge, Big Fatty Zhang only had to think for a moment before laughing heartily.

“No problem at all. I don’t have anywhere to concoct pills here,

but I'm friends with the Elder Brother who manages the immortal's caves. If we grease the wheels a bit, he can secretly get you into an Inner Sect disciple's cave. Of course, it can't be a long-term thing."

"Not long-term!" Bai Xiaochun said, eyes shining with excitement. "Not long at all. Half a year at the most!"

Big Fatty Zhang nodded. Leaving Bai Xiaochun behind, he went away for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, then returned proudly with a command medallion.

"Done," he announced. "It's not a very good immortal's cave, but it has a medicine concocting workstation. It's pretty close, I'll walk you over."

Bai Xiaochun let out a cheer, then flattered Big Fatty Zhang a bit more. Bursting with happiness, Big Fatty Zhang led Bai Xiaochun off to the immortal's cave.

It was relatively simple and crude for an immortal's cave, and very small, nothing like his cave back on Fragrant Cloud Peak. However, it had a medicine concocting workstation, which was enough for Bai Xiaochun.

Sitting there looking very satisfied, he took a deep breath and said, "Eldest Brother truly is a loyal friend!"

Moved, he reiterated to himself that he must not attempt any

experiments with the Lightning Detox Grand Magic. Nor could he test strange pills on animals. As far as exploding pill furnaces, he was sure he could avoid that. Considering all that, he was convinced that no problems would arise because of his medicine concocting.

“It’s time to research more ways to cleanse impurities!” Calming himself, he produced a handful of spirit plants, which he began to analyze in detail. Slowly, he immersed himself in the Dao of medicine.

## Chapter 109: A Light Rain On Violet Cauldron Peak....

---

During his first month on Violet Cauldron Peak, Bai Xiaochun worked quietly in the immortal's cave. None of the disciples around him even noticed that he was there. Big Fatty Zhang started to relax. At first, he had come to visit Bai Xiaochun fairly frequently to watch him at his concocting work, but eventually stopped visiting so often.

But then... another month passed.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered as he looked at the medicinal pills in front of him. After some detailed examination, he began to laugh loudly. During that month of work, he had made four major efforts to try to come up with a new method for cleansing impurities, and now, he had finally found his new direction.

“Using lightning to purge the pills with outside force is one method. But another method is to purge the spirit medicine from the inside!

“Bai Xiaochun, you really are a genius. Hahaha! I know exactly what to do. By using the principles of mutual augmentation and suppression, I can create a burning power even as I concoct the pills, something that will expunge the impurities. After the impurities are forced out, the final medicinal pill will no longer be toxic!” Getting more excited, he took a deep breath and got to work.

After organizing all of the medicinal plant and then beginning to feed them into the pill furnace, he started adding even more plants that weren't part of the pill formula, keeping careful records about everything he did.

Four days later, he once again slipped into a state of bedeviled focus. Circling continuously around the pill furnace, he made occasional adjustments to the Earthflame, sometimes adding in other spirit medicines, following his instincts to either dilute or strengthen the mixture.

As night fell, Bai Xiaochun's excitement grew as popping sounds began to ring out from the pill furnace. Soon, the furnace began to shake, and then a noxious black smoke billowed out. Bai Xiaochun quickly waved his sleeve to blow the smoke outside of the immortal's cave, where it floated up into the air. Some of it ended up being absorbed by the clouds above Violet Cauldron Peak, and some was carried by the wind in the direction of Green Crest Peak.

After the immortal's cave was cleared of smoke, Bai Xiaochun hurried over to the pill furnace and peered inside. It contained a single medicinal pill which he picked up and examined. It was clearly a toxic pill; however, whereas the previous version had been one hundred percent impure, this one was only about ninety-eight or ninety-nine percent impure.

He was quite pleased, and was now sure that he was on the right track. All he had to do was keep working toward a method to find the perfect combination of elements.

“Hahaha! This concocting method is much more low-profile. No



lightning. No thunder. I'm not affecting anyone else at all!" He was very happy. After all, he really didn't want to arouse the anger of the other disciples because of his concocting work.

Feeling very satisfied, he sat down cross-legged to meditate for a while. After finishing his daily work with the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture, the Undying Live Forever Technique, and the Waterswamp Kingdom, he headed over to the pill furnace to begin concocting again.

He devoted himself completely to his work. Every day, he would concoct four or five batches, and each time, black smoke would billow out, which he would subsequently blow out of the immortal's cave, where it rose up into the sky.

Ten days later, he was delighted to discover that while out of every ten batches, four were toxic pills, the levels of impurity were steadily dropping. Lately, they had dipped to about ninety-seven percent. It was clearly a reduction from the previous level of one hundred percent.

That wasn't the only progress he had made either. The pills that came out successfully also had fewer impurities. If he continued on down this path, he would be able to consistently produce mid-grade tier-3 spirit medicine.

Eyes burning with passion, he completely tuned out the outside world and went crazy with concocting medicine. It was almost like being in secluded meditation. He kept careful records, and constantly made adjustments as required. Soon, he increased his productivity to the point where he was producing seven or eight

batches per day. Black smoke was rising up into the sky almost constantly. Half a month later, he was delighted to find that the impurity levels in the toxic pills had dropped to ninety-five percent.

By the time Bai Xiaochun had been on Violet Cauldron Peak for two months, many disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak were beginning to breathe sighs of relief. They weren't sure where exactly Bai Xiaochun had gone off to, but they could sense that peace had been restored.

Other than Big Fatty Zhang, no one else on Violet Cauldron Peak knew that Bai Xiaochun had come there to concoct medicine. However, word had been spreading about all the things that had occurred on Fragrant Cloud Peak because of him. As Big Fatty Zhang heard more of the stories, he began to tremble.

He could never have imagined that Bai Xiaochun could cause such a huge stir on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Although he was a bit nervous, Bai Xiaochun had been very quiet, and hadn't drawn any attention at all. Gradually, Big Fatty Zhang began to relax again.

Time passed. By this point, Bai Xiaochun had been at his concocting work for three months straight. Black smoke poured continuously out of the immortal's cave, to the point where it was finally starting to attract some attention from nearby Violet Cauldron Peak disciples. However, none of them gave it much thought.

Big Fatty Zhang was calmer than ever. However, he had noticed something annoying lately, which was that it had started raining

on Violet Cauldron Peak. It was a very strange rain, considering that it only fell on Violet Cauldron Peak, and nowhere else.

Furthermore, the rain was dirty; if it fell on you, it would leave dark streaks behind. Gradually, other disciples on Violet Cauldron Peak started to notice, and people began wondering what exactly was going on. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was madly focused on pill concocting.... By this point, he was up to about fifteen batches per day.

He almost never took breaks, and was starting to look a bit sallow and thin. As for the toxic pills, their impurity levels continued to drop. They were now at about ninety-two to ninety-three percent.

“Only a few more months, and I’ll be able to get the toxicity levels below ninety percent. Then they’ll count as low-grade spirit medicines!” With a whoop of excitement, Bai Xiaochun immersed himself even further in concocting. Meanwhile, the sound of an uproar was building outside.

Big Fatty Zhang was walking along on one of the paths that wound through Violet Cauldron Peak when suddenly, the rain began to fall even harder than before. At the same time, an acrid odor began to fill the air. Then, Big Fatty Zhang’s eyes went wide as he realized that the rain splashing down onto him actually hurt. Furthermore, his clothing... was beginning to melt.

Big Fatty Zhang gaped in shock, then let out a cry of alarm when he realized that it would only be moments before his clothes were completely melted. He immediately dashed back in the direction of his residence.

Along the way, more cries of alarm rang out. As he ran along, Big Fatty Zhang saw other Violet Cauldron Peak disciples speeding along, their clothing in ruins. The more the rainwater soaked them, the more the fabric melted. There were even a few unlucky disciples who were already completely naked.

“Heavens! What’s... what’s happening!?!?”

“My clothes!!”

“What kind of rain is this? It stinks, and even hurts! It’s actually melting my clothes!!”

“Dammit! Even magical shields can’t stop it!” Violet Cauldron Peak was in a complete uproar. Anyone who didn’t get out of the rain immediately would quickly find their clothing melting off of their bodies.

Violet Cauldron Peak was devolving into chaos. Even some of the long-time Inner Sect disciples were going crazy. In all of their lives, they had never experienced anything like this. The screams of the female disciples were especially piercing.

The elders of Violet Cauldron Peak stared in shock. There were even some elders who were outside lecturing about magical techniques. When the rain fell on them, they trembled....

At the same time, many people looked over at Bai Xiaochun’s

immortal's cave, from which masses of black smoke billowed. As it rose up into the sky, the noxious black rain fell harder.

There was one particular Inner Sect disciple who did his best to cover up his clothing. Alarmed, he flew along until he happened to run directly into a cloud of black smoke.

Instantly, his clothing was gone.... Letting out a shriek of alarm, he unleashed the power of lightning, and was soon wreathed in electricity. Moments later, he donned a new robe, only to find that it was already melting.

“What’s going on? Whoever’s in that immortal’s cave, get out here!” That Inner Sect disciple... was none other than Lu Tianlei.

When other people noticed the source of the problem, they began to roar in rage.

“Dammit! It’s coming from there! I knew something was off. Nobody was living in that immortal’s cave before, but for the past few months I’ve seen black smoke coming out of it!”

“That black smoke is what’s causing this disaster! It’s been rising up into the air for months now. It’s affected the climate! That’s why this acid rain is falling!!”

As people cried out in rage, Big Fatty Zhang was holed up in his residence, staring out blankly at what was happening outside. His mind was spinning as he looked at the falling rain, and suddenly,

he understood how the disciples back on Fragrant Cloud Peak had felt....

At the top of the mountain, the peak lord of Violet Cauldron Peak, Xu Meixiang, was looking around in stupefaction. Not daring to set foot outside her mansion, she waved her finger toward the sky, activating Violet Cauldron Peak's spell formation. A shield of light appeared, which temporarily stopped the rain from falling onto the mountain.

However, the shield was visibly being eaten away by the destructive rain.

The disciples of Violet Cauldron Peak took advantage of the brief respite to put on new clothing. Incensed, and bursting with killing intent, they rushed in the direction of Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave.

Soon, the disciples on Fragrant Cloud Peak noticed that the Violet Cauldron Peak spell formation shield had been activated, and noticed that rain was falling over it.

“What's happening over on Violet Cauldron Peak?”

Even as they pondered the situation, the voices of countless individuals joined together to cause a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering roar of rage to rise up from the direction of Violet Cauldron Peak.

“Bai. Xiao. CHUN!!”

The sound echoed out in all directions, shaking even Violet Cauldron Peak itself. The disciples from Fragrant Cloud Peak looked around, shaken. Then, the image of a certain individual appeared in their minds, and they understood everything.

“Bai Xiaochun went to Violet Cauldron Peak to concoct medicine!”

“That’s definitely the reason. The peak lord said he couldn’t concoct medicine here, so he went to Violet Cauldron Peak!!”

The roaring of the Violet Cauldron Peak disciples caused Bai Xiaochun to scream in terror. He had just been about to excitedly start another batch when he heard the sound of countless magical techniques battering the immortal’s cave. Gaping in shock, he looked out to see a mob of enraged disciples surrounding the cave.

Lu Tianlei was there, electricity dancing around him as he charged forward.

Wings popped out of the terrified Bai Xiaochun’s back, and he took to flight. Enraged shouts echoed out behind him as the Violet Cauldron Peak disciples gave chase.

Big Fatty Zhang watched from a distance, swallowing hard and quickly pretending as if he hadn’t seen anything. Under no circumstances did he wish anyone to know that he was the one

who had arranged for Bai Xiaochun to get an immortal's cave.

Even as the Violet Cauldron Peak disciples began to chase Bai Xiaochun down, all of a sudden....

Cries of alarm rang up from the direction of Green Crest Peak.



# Chapter 110: Exiled To 10,000 Snakes Valley

---

Something had happened which not a single person had been aware of. Partially due to monsoon winds, only some of the black smoke had made it into the clouds above Violet Cauldron Peak. The rest had been carried by the wind to Green Crest Peak.

If it had only been a tiny bit, it would eventually have just faded away without doing anything. But considering the daily buildup, it was no surprise that when rain began to fall on Violet Cauldron Peak, the effects eventually spread to Green Crest Peak....

Originally, the disciples from Green Crest Peak had simply watched the events playing out on Fragrant Cloud Peak and Violet Cauldron Peak, shocked, but at the same time, gloating in the misfortune of the other disciples. Furthermore, they had all taken steps to prevent Bai Xiaochun from ever coming to Green Crest Peak.

Third Fatty Hei's friends had even warned her against taking him in.

But then, the raindrops began to fall. Shocked expressions appeared as people looked up to find that the sky above Green Crest Peak was filled with black clouds.

Although they weren't as dense as those above Violet Cauldron Peak, once the acid rain began to fall, and the disciples' clothes began to melt, cries of alarm rose up.

As the screams intensified, numerous beams of sword light shot out from Green Crest Peak toward Violet Cauldron Peak, joining the group of disciples from there who were chasing down Bai Xiaochun.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Dammit! Don’t tell me that Bai Xiaochun secretly came to Green Crest Peak too!”

“He must have! That vile fiend! He definitely snuck over here to concoct medicine!!”

The Green Crest Peak disciples were going mad. Quite a few were already on the verge of losing all of their clothing. Putting on new clothing didn’t do any good. Green Crest Peak devolved into enraged chaos, and the disciples quickly became allies with the Violet Cauldron Peak disciples in their desire to catch Bai Xiaochun.

Shangguan Tianyou was among them. Although his robes were still in one piece, his murderous rage burned hot. At long last, he had found an opportunity to pay Bai Xiaochun back for the events in the Wildweed Mountains.

Rumbling sounds filled the air, along with Bai Xiaochun’s screams. It was bad enough that the disciples of Violet Cauldron Peak were chasing him down, but then Green Crest Peak joined in.

Then he heard what the Green Crest Peak disciples were saying, and he felt more deeply maligned than ever.

“I never went to Green Crest Peak. Really!!”

All of the more than 10,000 disciples from Green Crest Peak were in motion now, speeding along on their flying swords. When they heard Bai Xiaochun’s explanation, though, they only became angrier. “Liar!”

As the sword light bore down on Bai Xiaochun, the Violet Cauldron Peak disciples unleashed countless magical techniques. Bai Xiaochun was so scared he was screaming at the top of his lungs.

“I’ve shed my own blood for the sect–”

BOOM! The attacks of the Violet Cauldron Peak disciples were driving Bai Xiaochun to near madness.

“AIIIIIEEE! I’m a Prestige disciple!!”

BOOOOOOM! As the countless beams of sword light closed in, Bai Xiaochun fluttered the wings on his back, and sweat poured down his face.

“I’m the Junior Brother of the sect leader!”

“Even if you were the son of the sect leader, we’d still beat the daylight out of you!!” The disciples of two mountain peaks joined together in their anger as they chased after Bai Xiaochun with deadly intent.

“You people... you people are so unreasonable! They’re trying to kill me! They’re gonna kill me!!” Bai Xiaochun’s scalp was entirely numb. He had done nothing more than concoct some pills, and these people had gone completely mad.

Looking like he was about to cry, he pushed forward with as much speed as possible as he shot toward Fragrant Cloud Peak. Now, he suddenly felt as if the disciples from there were a lot more easy-going. After all, Fragrant Cloud Peak was his home.

A huge mob was chasing him back toward Fragrant Cloud Peak. He looked like a mouse whose tail had been stepped on as he shot up the mountain, the other disciples in hot pursuit.

Just as the disciples from the other mountains were about to step foot on Fragrant Cloud Peak, an enraged, thunderous snort echoed out from the summit of the mountain.

“Turn your asses around this instant!”

The voice sounded like the boom of thunder. All of the disciples preparing to charge up Fragrant Cloud Peak coughed up mouthfuls of blood and tumbled backward. A massive power roiled out, pushing all of them away. When the shock left their faces, they exchanged glances and quickly realized how impulsive they had

been. Bowing their heads, they clasped hands in apology and retreated.

The commotion quickly died down.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw what had just happened, he was deeply moved. He almost felt like a young child who had been fighting, and losing, only to have a parent step in to the rescue and wallop the opponent.

“Yeah, that’s right!” he shouted, gesticulating wildly. “Turn your asses around! Especially you people from Green Crest Peak, you–” He was just about to explain how he really hadn’t concocted any medicine on Green Crest Peak when all of a sudden, pressure weighed down on him as Li Qinghou materialized up ahead. Face grim, he waved his sleeve, causing Bai Xiaochun to fly through the air toward him. A moment later, he had Bai Xiaochun by the neck.

“Uncle Li, I-I-I really didn’t go to Green Crest– AIIIIIEEEE!!” It didn’t matter how fast he blurted the words, he couldn’t finish speaking before Li Qinghou flew up into the air.

The countless disciples from the other two mountain peaks watched in utter joy as the scene played out. As for the Fragrant Cloud Peak disciples, they looked on with odd expressions before letting out long sighs.

“Bai Xiaochun really got unlucky this time!”

“He pissed off the peak lord. He’s really in for it now.”

“He didn’t just piss off the peak Lord, he drove the entire south bank crazy.” As countless disciples looked on in delight, the blood drained from Bai Xiaochun’s face. He had just noticed which direction Li Qinghou was heading. It was none other than....

“10,000.... 10,000 Snakes Valley!!” Shrieking, he said, “I’m sorry, Uncle Li!”

It didn’t take long for Li Qinghou to take the wailing Bai Xiaochun behind Fragrant Cloud Peak to 10,000 Snakes Valley. As soon as they set foot inside, countless vipers looked up and hissed loudly. It was even possible to see the venom dripping from their fangs.

Bai Xiaochun was so scared he started shaking. Most terrifying of all was that Li Qinghou continued toward the cave in the middle of the valley.

“I just wanted to concoct medicine! I didn’t do it on purpose.... Uncle Li, you have to listen to me! I was just doing what you told me. I didn’t concoct medicine on Fragrant Cloud Peak! I—”

All his frantic explanation did, however, was cause Li Qinghou’s expression to grow even darker. He even sped up as he headed deep into the cave.

At first, everything was black, but soon, one pair of cold eyes

after another snapped open to stare icily at Bai Xiaochun and Li Qinghou. Because Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base had advanced so much, he was able to see their auras much more clearly now.

He was petrified to find that this place was far, far more terrifying than he had previously imagined.

That was even more the case now that he had mastered all five volumes of spirit creatures. Even though they were surrounded by darkness, when he circulated his spiritual power, he quickly identified many of the snakes, and recalled the information about them.

“A three steps viper!

“A morningeye anaconda!!

“That's... a goldsilver verminsnake!” To his shock, Bai Xiaochun found that all of the snakes were venomous, and according to the five volumes of spirit creatures, they were incredibly powerful. In fact, even Foundation Establishment cultivators who didn't deal with them quickly enough would be killed.

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Li Qinghou had dragged Bai Xiaochun to the depths of the cave, into a huge subterranean cavern filled with countless hissing snakes. There were even nine that exuded the power of a cultivation base equivalent to the eighth level of Qi Condensation. Their eyes were bright red, and their fangs constantly dripped with shocking venom.

A certain distance into the cavern was a stone hut surrounded by a spell formation that kept everything within thirty meters clear of snakes. That was where the snakes piled up en masse. Despite their distance from the hut itself, Bai Xiaochun still felt an intense sensation of deadly crisis.

A thump could be heard as Li Qinghou waved his sleeve, sending Bai Xiaochun tumbling down next to the stone hut.

“Want to concoct medicine? Do it here. There’s Earthflame and a pill furnace. And take this. At least here you won’t disturb any of the other disciples!” Snorting coldly, Li Qinghou tossed a bag of holding over to Bai Xiaochun. “You’ll find plenty of medicinal plants and food in there. Stay here and stay out of trouble. After you’ve had some time to think, I’ll come take you out.” With a final glare at Bai Xiaochun, he did a final check to make sure the spell formation was working, then flew away. Having no other choice, he had finally resorted to using this place to try to grind away some of Bai Xiaochun’s mischievousness.

Of course, deep down, he truly cared for him, and was careful to make sure the spell formation was in good order. Based on his understanding of Bai Xiaochun, he was certain that he wouldn’t step out of the spell formation.

Bai Xiaochun appeared to be on the verge of tears as he watched Li Qinghou leave. Moments later, without the pressure from Li Qinghou to suppress them, the snakes started to slither about here and there. They bared their fangs, and even tried to break through the spell formation shield, sending venom splattering about in all



directions.

Further off in the distance were some snakes in the eighth level of Qi Condensation who eyed Bai Xiaochun coldly, almost as if they wished to swallow him up. Bai Xiaochun began to pant.

“Those are bloodgod cobras! I can’t believe they’re in the eighth level of Qi Condensation. One drop of their venom could kill ten thousand people!”

Heart pounding with fear, he looked around a bit more, and realized that there were three snakes who were comparable to the ninth level of Qi Condensation, and there were even two in the great circle.

The fluctuations that emanated from them were not the same as those from cultivators. These were deadly venomous snakes!

Most heart-pounding of all was that there was one set of fluctuations that seemed even more powerful than the rest. And all of them seemed to be staring at him.

Soon, the sky outside grew dark, and Bai Xiaochun sat there, sighing miserably.

“What do I do now...?”

# Chapter 111: Making Contact With The Shackles

---

It was deep in the night, and the moon hung bright in the sky. It was very dark inside the cave, but Bai Xiaochun could hear a cacophony of slithering and hissing outside. It was hair-raisingly terrifying.

The stone hut was small, and other than the Earthflame formation and the pill furnace, was completely empty.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and activated the Earthflame formation, causing the light of flames to flicker out around him. That made him feel a bit better. He was the type of person who tended to get used to new environments easily. Although he was scared, he knew he had to adapt. A moment later, he peered into the bag of holding Li Qinghou had left him, whereupon his eyes went wide.

It was filled with a massive quantity of medicinal plants, some of which cost a huge amount of merit points to acquire from the sect. There were even a few that he recognized from the five volumes of plants and vegetation as types that the sect didn't offer.

There was a huge variety of all types of medicinal plants, too many to count. If he used them carefully, he would be able to concoct not only tier-3 spirit medicines, but possibly even tier-4 spirit medicines.

Getting excited, he heated up the pill furnace and then began concocting some medicine. As long as he could distract himself

from the sounds coming from outside, he could still continue his research. This time, he was sure that he would be able to reduce the impurities in the tier-3 medicine below ninety percent.

Time passed. Three months later, Bai Xiaochun's hair was disheveled, and he had completely forgotten where he was. He was utterly focused on medicine concocting, and as for the black smoke which resulted in acid rain on the outside, it was actually refreshingly nourishing to the vipers in the cave. The snakes struggled to be the first to breathe it in, after which they emitted deafening hisses.

Bai Xiaochun didn't pay any attention to that, though. He was at a critical point in his concocting, and had reduced the impurities in the toxic pills all the way down to ninety-one or ninety-two percent. Just a bit further, and he would have succeeded in reaching his goal.

His eyes were bloodshot as he madly concocted medicine. In the blink of an eye, three more months passed.

He had now been living in the snake cave for half a year. In addition to his concocting, he practiced cultivation. He was now able to fully unleash the Waterswamp Kingdom, which resulted in incredible pressure. Unfortunately, he was completely incapable of summoning his life essence spirit.

He'd also grown accustomed to the snakes. He would even take the occasional walk outside of the stone hut. The snakes would eye him coldly, ready to pounce the instant he set foot outside of the spell formation shield.

Li Qinghou occasionally came to check in on Bai Xiaochun in secret. After coming to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun was safe, he breathed a sigh of relief.

Because Bai Xiaochun hadn't been seen for half a year, the south bank quieted back down. There was no thunder or lightning, no noxious clouds, no acid rain. Everyone enjoyed the peace and tranquility.

Occasionally, people would think about Bai Xiaochun, but most people had heard that Li Qinghou took him to 10,000 Snakes Valley. Furthermore, whenever people considering breaking sect rules, they would think of Bai Xiaochun and say to themselves, "I can't pull a Bai Xiaochun! This is wrong. If Bai Xiaochun did something like that, he would definitely be punished. I should rethink things."

Time passed. Another six months. It had now been a full year since Bai Xiaochun had disappeared from the public eye. Even Zheng Yuandong was sighing.

"Sending Bai Xiaochun to 10,000 Snakes Valley was definitely the right thing to do," he thought. "The only things there are snakes. He won't be able to cause problems for anyone."

However, whether it was Zheng Yuandong, Li Qinghou, or the disciples of the three mountain peaks, all of them... had clearly underestimated Bai Xiaochun....

On one particular day, Bai Xiaochun was there in his stone hut, having just finished concocting a batch of medicinal pills. There was no black smoke. The pill inside the furnace was no longer a toxic pill, but rather, an eighty-nine percent impure low-grade medicinal pill!

Although it would be considered low-grade even among other low-grade pills, it was still completely different than a toxic pill.

Excited, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. After trying another batch, he confirmed his success. At long last, when it came to tier-3 spirit medicine... he could succeed one hundred percent of the time!

With this level of mastery of tier-3 spirit medicine, even pill formulas he hadn't encountered before would have a perfect success rate after he solved any minor problems which cropped up.

Thoroughly stirred up, he rushed out of the stone hut, laughing proudly. He had paid a very heavy price, and spent a huge amount of time, to reach this point.

Actually, now that he thought about it, even being thrown into the snake cave was worth it!

He took a deep breath, swished his sleeve, and looked with disdain... at the snakes surrounding him.

“Next comes cultivation. I need to reach the ninth level of Qi

Condensation, and get my Undying Gold Skin!!” Feeling very proud of himself, he returned to the stone hut, where he once again began to concoct medicine.

Pulling out his turtle-wok, he performed spirit enhancements on all of the medicinal pills he had produced, then consumed them.

His cultivation base increased steadily. He had already been in the great circle of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, just a sliver away from breaking through to the next level. A month later, as he sat there cross-legged meditating, visualizing an enormous war mammoth, his cultivation base exploded with power. The spiritual power within him thrummed like a hundred rivers flowing together into a sea.

After closer inspection, the sea actually looked like a dragon, as though a dragon had actually come to exist inside of him. As it circulated through his qi vessels, his fleshly body emitted cracking sounds, and the image of a mammoth appeared behind him.

It was a huge beast with long fur, rising up on its hind legs to let out a powerful roar. When it slammed its feet down onto the ground, ripples spread out through the air, causing the nearby snakes to tremble. The eight bloodgod cobras’ eyes shone with piercing light, their scales stood on end, and the hoods on their heads opened wide.

Bai Xiaochun had been observing the image of the mammoth from the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture. The resulting surge of spiritual power pushed his cultivation base all the way from the eighth level of Qi Condensation into the ninth!

The power of his fleshly body rocketed up, and his qi and blood flowed rapidly. He actually seemed to grow a bit larger as every bit of flesh and muscle flourished.

Apparently because of his Undying Live Forever Technique, his silver skin flickered, and something strange happened. It was as if his fleshly body had come into contact with a type of shackle, a barrier that someone with an ordinary body couldn't break through!

Rumbling filled his mind, and everything felt like it was spinning. It was like he was a bottle which, after being filled with water, had more water forced into it, causing the bottle to begin to shake and crack.

A tremor ran through him, and his eyes snapped open to reveal an astonishing, piercing light.

If any ordinary disciple in the Qi Condensation stage could see Bai Xiaochun right now, that person would be shaken to the core. Although the pressure he exuded was not that of a Foundation Establishment cultivator it would still cause anyone to tremble in capitulation.

It was like a pressure which could crush down on all living things!

“Everyone has shackles,” he murmured. “Regardless of the level of cultivation base or fleshly body, there are shackles which people

cannot break through.... So, the shackles mentioned in the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture... are the same shackles I heard about before!

“In the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture... the power of the mammoth represents the body, and can push a person’s fleshly body to the very pinnacle. The power of the dragon represents the spirit, and can push a person’s cultivation base to the limit of Qi Condensation. That is the purpose of the first and second levels, to reach the pinnacle, not to make contact with the shackle. When cultivating the third level, the dragon and the mammoth combine and rise even higher, and that is when contact with the shackle can be made. By borrowing power from the meridians of heaven and earth, as well as a Foundation Establishment Pill, one can break through, form a sea of qi, and... reach Foundation Establishment!

“Obviously, not just anyone can cultivate the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture. Only people who have cultivated both their spirit and their body all the way the eighth level of Qi Condensation can successfully do so.

“My Undying Live Forever Technique might be incomplete, and only contain the Undying Skin. But as that mysterious senior said when he saved me, if I reach the level of Undying Gold Skin, I can make contact with the first shackle. When that happens, if I can break through it, it will be good fortune for me.

“What I’ve sensed today must be that so-called... shackle!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone so brightly that they were like lamps inside the dark stone hut.



“The founding patriarch created the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture. By cultivating it to the very end, you can combine the dragon and the mammoth, and make contact with the shackle. However, making contact is the limit.

“In the first volume of the Undying Codex, the Undying Gold Skin can also make contact with the shackle, but that is the limit there as well. Only by breaking through the shackle after making contact can you go on to cultivate the second volume, the Undying Heavenly King!

“Right now, though, I’ve only successfully cultivated the first level of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture, and my Undying Skin is only at the peak of silver. Once I experience a breakthrough, I should meet the requirements... to make contact with the shackle!” Bai Xiaochun was panting by this point.

“Actually, making a breakthrough with either technique... should enable me to make contact with the first shackle!” Excited, Bai Xiaochun thought the matter over again, and realized something even more exciting.

“If this analysis is correct, I wonder what level my fleshly body will be at if I break through with both the Undying Gold Skin and the Dragon and Mammoth?”

Although he couldn’t be sure of the answer, he was filled with intense anticipation. Taking a deep breath, he produced some medicinal pills to restore his vital energy, then began to cultivate the Undying Live Forever Technique.

The flickering silver light inside of him was gradually filling with strands of gold. They were faint at first, but they indicated that his Undying Live Forever Technique was on the threshold of the Undying Gold Skin.

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, he finished his session of cultivation and excitedly emerged from the stone hut. Looking around the cave, he subconsciously adopted the posture of a hero, flicking his sleeve and murmuring, “I’m already in the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Just wait until I break through that first shackle. When that happens, not a single person in the eighth level of Qi Condensation will be a match for me!”

Sighing to himself, he suddenly noticed the masses of snakes around him, and how they were slithering and hissing, some of them even spitting venom.

Off in the distance were the bloodgod cobras, who were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation. One of them suddenly shot forward, only to bounce off of the spell formation’s shield.

Stunned, Bai Xiaochun glared around at the hissing snakes, angry at how they were constantly spitting out venom.

“You really think Lord Bai has no way to deal with you? Don’t push me, you bunch of—”

Before he could finish speaking, a whole group of snakes launched themselves into the air and then slammed into the shield

right in front of him.

“That’s it, you pushed me!” he howled, rushing back into the stone hut.

# Chapter 112: Two Hearts Intertwined, At Long Last Reunited

---

Bai Xiaochun sat cross-legged in front of his pill furnace, simmering with anger.

“These snakes are totally evil!” he said with a cold harrumph. “Not cute at all!

“Now that I’ve mastered tier-3 spirit medicine, you think I can’t teach you a lesson, you stupid little snakes?!

“You like spitting venom and hissing all the time, right? Hmph! Well I’m gonna concoct a medicinal pill to make you all shut your mouths!” Bursting with confidence, he flicked his sleeve and began to contemplate what medicine formula to use.

“If I want to shut these snakes up, I need a really tough medicinal pill, something that will really keep their mouths stuck shut....” Chuckling darkly, he began to select the ingredients he would use.

Time passed. Seven days later, Bai Xiaochun had already descended into bedevilled madness. One after another, he had removed the medicinal plants from his bag of holding and examined them carefully to make his selections. In the end, he selected a total of thirty-seven medicinal plants.

After brewing them together in a special way, they would make an extremely sticky substance, but that wasn’t enough for Bai

Xiaochun. After drawing upon the principles of mutual augmentation and suppression, he began to make adjustments to make the medicinal pill even stickier.

A month later, his hair was completely disheveled. Thick black smoke roiled out of the pill furnace, within which could be seen a heavy buildup of medicinal dregs. This was his tenth failure of the month. Outside, the hissing of the snakes was as loud as ever. Frowning, his desire to teach them a lesson grew stronger than ever.

“Maybe I’m thinking about it the wrong way. I’ve been trying to use an outside force to make the mixture more sticky. Although I used some of the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression, perhaps studying how these snakes tick could give me some inspiration to improve the medicinal efficacy!” After a bit more thought, he walked out of the stone hut and began pacing along the border of the spell formation. When he found the perfect opportunity, his hand shot out like lightning toward a five-eyed adder. Before the target snake could react, it had been grabbed and pulled into the spell formation.

Almost as soon as Bai Xiaochun’s hand pulled back into the spell formation, countless blasts of venom hit the shield’s surface, followed by innumerable snakes.

However, Bai Xiaochun was immersed in the Dao of medicine, and completely disregarded them. Hand clamped tightly onto the five-eyed adder, he turned and walked back to the stone hut. Soon afterward, the hair-raising sound of mad cackling echoed out from inside.

The five-eyed adder was as strong as the third level of Qi Condensation, but in Bai Xiaochun's hands, that was weaker than a spirit tail chicken. The snake's body was soon peeled open, allowing Bai Xiaochun to examine everything about it in minute detail, even its bones and blood.

After thoughtful contemplation, he adjusted the combination of medicinal plants and began to concoct.

The next day, the pill furnace trembled, and black smoke poured out. Bai Xiaochun was left coughing, but less forcefully than before. After racking his brains for a bit, he went out to get another snake to study. Soon, he had another flash of inspiration.

Three days later, more black smoke poured out of the pill furnace. Maddened, Bai Xiaochun let out a roar and went out to do more research, his eyes completely bloodshot.

Another month passed, and by this point, Bai Xiaochun had already forgotten why he had come to be so focused on creating this medicine formula. All he did was work on his creation, occasionally launching a hand out through the spell formation shield to grab another snake. He got especially good at that part.

During the month that had passed, he'd caught and studied dozens of snakes. The snakes outside eyed him as coldly, as if he were a mortal enemy. The sound of their hissing, and the flow of their venom, never ceased. The snakes in the eighth level of Qi Condensation continued to occasionally attack the spell formation,

looking for a weakness, hoping to consume Bai Xiaochun.

“Nope. That’s not it. Not good enough!” By now, two months had passed since he began working on a medicinal pill to shut the mouths of the venomous snakes. He had failed over a hundred times, without even one success.

Creating medicine formulas was not an easy thing, something he was now acutely aware of. However, he didn’t give up. In fact, he descended deeper into the madness of his experimentation. Another two months passed, and he had experienced hundreds of failures, but managed to succeed once. When that happened, he looked discontentedly at the black spirit medicine he held in his hand.

“How come there’s only one pill...

“There are so many snakes here! If I only get one to shut its mouth, that won’t help at all....” Eyes bloodshot, he tugged angrily at his hair and stared at the pill.

“I need a way to spread the effects. The best pill would be one that, once consumed by a snake, caused it to emit some sort of aura that infected all the other snakes.... Hmm... Infection? Right! Infection! I need to create a medicine formula that starts an epidemic!!” Eyes shining brightly, breath coming in ragged pants, Bai Xiaochun was now convinced that he was aimed in the right direction.

Soon after, he suddenly started laughing. Considering the

madness of the laughter, anyone who might have been able to see Bai Xiaochun at that moment would have gasped and sworn an oath to never disturb him in the middle of medicine concocting.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun emanated a vile aura.

With new inspiration, he once again descended into medicine concocting. He mixed and matched the medicines, he adjusted the augmentation and suppression, he made small changes here and there. He grabbed snakes with increasing frequency. On a few dangerous occasions, he almost seemed soulless, as though he didn't even notice or care what was happening around him. He was completely and utterly focused on creating a new medicine formula.

Time passed. One month. Two months. Three months. Four months....

Before long, it had been six months since Bai Xiaochun started his work on creating a medicine formula. During that half year, he had failed too many times to count. He was in a complete mess, clothes rumpled, hair disheveled, face smudged with ash. And yet, his crimson eyes glowed with excitement as he stared at the pill furnace.

“It's gonna work. Hahaha! I'm going to do it this time!” As he howled in excitement, the pill furnace began to tremble. He had poured his heart and soul into this medicinal pill, and now that it was on the verge of finally appearing in the world, Bai Xiaochun's excitement only grew.



“Li the Snake! Li the Swindler! When you tossed Lord Bai into this place, did you really think he couldn’t handle some measly snakes? You just wait until this treasured pill is finished being concocted, then I’ll teach your stupid little snakes a lesson. Humph! Who knows, after this, I might even be able to lead these snakes to conquer the world!” In the middle of his bragging and maniacal laughter, Bai Xiaochun’s expression suddenly flickered, and then he stared out of the stone hut.

Instantly, his jaw dropped.

He wasn’t sure exactly when, but a visitor had arrived, and was now standing there at his door. It wasn’t very tall, had two white paws, and two long ears sticking straight up. It even had a fluffy little tail which twitched back and forth as it stood there.

It had red eyes, and a cute little mouth with two teeth sticking out the front. Currently, it was standing there staring at Bai Xiaochun.

Time suddenly seemed to slow to a crawl. Bai Xiaochun’s widened.

“What are you doing here!?” he shouted. When Fragrant Cloud Peak had been thrown into chaos, Bai Xiaochun had searched high and low, but had been unable to find this very... talking rabbit!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun started yelling, the rabbit suddenly imitated his appearance and then yelled, “What are you doing

here!?”

Eyes wide, the rabbit turned and fled at top speed, simultaneously letting loose a stream of words.

“Heavens! What’s that?!”

“Did you see that? That rabbit can talk!”

“Keep this on the down low, but yesterday I saw Elder Zhou go into a room with those phoenixes of his. Afterward, I heard some really strange noises....

“Elder Brother Hou Yunfei, you’re so naughty! What are you doing...? Uh... what’s that? Why are those monkeys twitching like that?!”

“Junior Sister Meixiang, I, Li Qinghou, am not fickle in love. After I break through to the Gold Core stage, I’ll definitely take you as my Daoist partner!”

“Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!”

“Li the Snake! Li the Swindler! When you tossed Lord Bai into this place, did you really think he couldn’t handle some measly snakes? You just wait until this treasured pill is finished being concocted, then I’ll teach your stupid little snakes a lesson. Humph! Who knows, after this, I might even be able to lead these

snakes to conquer the world! Hahahahahaha!”

Even as the words echoed out, the rabbit sped out of the stone hut. When Bai Xiaochun heard the final passage, his face completely fell, and then he let out a howl of fury.

He tried to catch the rabbit, but it was too fast. Bai Xiaochun burst out of the stone hut, but his shouting caused the countless snakes in the cave to hiss and spray venom. As for the rabbit, it was unimaginably dextrous, and evaded all the snakes with ease. When they tried to bite down onto it, all they bit was air, and the rabbit... vanished, leaving behind nothing but a puff of smoke.

Off in the distance, it was possible to hear it reciting all of the passages it knew, which echoed back and forth in the subterranean cavern.

Bai Xiaochun tottered on the verge of collapse. He wanted to chase after it, but clearly, he was no match for it in terms of dexterity. He could only stare off in the direction it had fled, looking like he was about to cry. When he thought of that rabbit's proclivities, and how loud its voice was, he began to sweat profusely. If the rabbit escaped to spread word, and Li Qinghou caught wind of it, Bai Xiaochun could only imagine the catastrophe that would result.

“Dammit!” he thought, grinding his teeth. “What kind of a rabbit is that?!?” However, the truth was that nobody knew the answer. After all, he was the one who had created the thing.

The feeling that he had screwed himself over caused Bai Xiaochun's madness to grow. Clearing his throat anxiously, he howled, "Peak Lord Li is brilliant and mighty! He's invincible wherever he goes! He's my most beloved relative!

"Uncle Li, I, Bai Xiaochun, will definitely work hard in the future, and promise that I'll never disappoint you!"

"I, Bai Xiaochun, am inherently naughty and mischievous, and should definitely have been sent here for punishment. I spend all my days in contemplation. Many, many thanks to you, exalted peak lord...." On the verge of tears, he continued to let loose words non stop, hoping that the rabbit might hear some of them and remember them.

Not long after, a rumbling sound could be heard coming from the pill furnace in the stone hut, and a medicinal aroma spread out. Looking miserable, Bai Xiaochun cursed the rabbit inwardly, and then sighed and turned around. Upon opening the pill furnace, he saw a black and white pill that glowed with a strange light.

# Chapter 113: Something Really Bad....

---

There was something strange about this particular tier-3 spirit medicine. As for its overall quality, shockingly, it had surpassed the low-grade to reach mid-grade. Bai Xiaochun was ecstatic, and immediately forgot about how depressed he was because of the rabbit.

Holding the pill in his hand, his excitement grew until he was panting, and his eyes glittering.

“This pill is a spirit medicine that can change the fate of 10,000 Snakes Valley.... It will teach all of these snakes... how to shut their mouths!” Even as a proud smile spread across his face, he suddenly remembered the rabbit, and his heart thumped. But then the violent hisses of the snakes reached his ears, as well as the sound of snakes slamming into the spell formation shield.

“Pipe down!” he growled, glaring over at them. With that, he produced the turtle-wok and performed a spirit enhancement.... Furthermore, he didn’t stop at a twofold enhancement; he drew upon his few remaining spirit tails to perform a threefold enhancement.

Silver light glittered, and many of the impurities in the medicinal pill were removed; shockingly, it rose from mid-grade to premium-grade!

Medicinal pill in hand, Bai Xiaochun strode out of the stone hut to stand at the edge of the spell formation, where he looked at the

countless snakes spraying venom and slamming into the shield.

“Half a year ago, Lord Bai told you that I would show you how awesome I am. Don’t forget. You forced me to do this!” With that, he waved his hand, sending the medicinal pill shooting out of the spell formation to land in the middle of all the snakes.

He had added a drop of his own blood to the mixture, so as soon as the pill flew out, countless snakes pounced, struggling amongst each other to be the one to swallow it down. The snake to win out in the end was in the fourth level of Qi Condensation, a cloudy-eyed death viper. As soon as it swallowed the pill, a tremor ran through it, and its eyes began to shine with a strange light.

Bai Xiaochun looked over excitedly, but before anything else could happen, one of the bloodgod cobras charged forth. Considering it was in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, it crushed numerous other snakes that got in its path, reducing them to nothing more than a gory paste. Then, it swallowed the cloudy-eyed death viper in a single gulp.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide as he looked over at the bloodgod cobra, which looked back at him with cold eyes before slithering to a rocky outcropping, where it coiled up.

Bai Xiaochun was starting to get nervous, but had no choice other than to wait and see what else happened. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, the bloodgod cobra suddenly shivered. Apparently, it wanted to open its mouth, but there was something very sticky keeping it shut. It struggled mightily, and managed to open its mouth a crack, revealing sticky strands stretching

between its lips and fangs.

Bai Xiaochun was delighted to see that his work was a success, and eagerly awaited the second effect of the spirit medicine to start working.

Yet again, enough time passed for an incense stick to burn. The bloodgod cobra's mouth was now completely sealed shut. Its eyes were bulging out of its head, and instead of being cold and vicious, they now looked like the eyes of a goldfish. The snake seemed confused, and instead of being fierce like before, it seemed slightly cute....

Soon, poofing sounds could be heard from the bloodgod cobra, like that of flatulence. A pink gaseous substance appeared, which rapidly transformed into a fog that spread out in all directions.

More poofing sounds could be heard; apparently the bloodgod cobra was not yet finished expelling gas. Bai Xiaochun looked on excitedly as the process continued for the rest of the day.

Other than the area within the spell formation, the entire cave was now filled with a pink haze, which the other snakes inhaled. Gradually, a sticky substance began to build up in their mouths, and their eyes began to bulge. Soon, the next set of snakes began to pass gas.

Eventually, the poofing sounds rang out like muffled thunder, echoing out about the cave constantly. As the haze filled the subterranean chamber, all the of the snakes came to be affected.

Even the snakes deepest within the chamber, whose glittering eyes Bai Xiaochun found the most frightening, began to emit poofing sounds.

A few days later, the haze faded away. Bai Xiaochun stood there in the spell formation, looking around at the silent snake cave. There was no hissing, no venom spraying around. The mouths of all the snakes were shut tight, and their blank eyes bulged with confusion.

Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Sticking his chin up proudly, he naturally assumed the sullen manner of a lonely hero and swished his sleeve.

“With the snap of a finger, I shut the mouths of all the snakes in 10,000 Snakes Valley. As for that profoundly consummate pill of mine, I shall hereby name it... the Shut Your Trap Pill!”

The lonely hero strode out from within the spell formation into the hordes of lovely little snakes. As he looked around, he smiled happily and felt like even more of a hero. But then he noticed a one-step viper off in the distance who was glowing red, almost as if its body were heating up. Then, in the strangest of developments, it suddenly started thrashing around violently.

Now that the one-step viper’s mouth was stopped up, it couldn’t hiss, and even seemed impervious to pain. Soon, its skin was lacerated and bleeding, and yet it didn’t stop thrashing around.



Shocked, Bai Xiaochun had a mind to intervene, but the one-step viper truly seemed to have gone mad. Then, Bai Xiaochun's face fell as more snakes in the vicinity all started turning red and thrashing around. The heat emanating from them even caused the air to ripple and distort.

Most conspicuous of all was the bloodgod cobra, which had grown much larger since consuming the medicinal pill, and was thrashing about with particular violence.

In the depths of the cave, rumbling sounds began to echo out, and soon all of the snakes were thrashing around with maddened violence. Some of them even launched themselves into the air and slammed into the stone walls.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were wide as saucers as he dove back into the spell formation. Instantly, the countless surrounding snakes began to batter against the spell formation shield as if they were insane. The mere sight of it caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to grow numb.

"Oh man, this is bad. These snakes are going crazy. If they keep thrashing around, something really bad is going to happen!" Bai Xiaochun was starting to get very nervous. His original intention had simply been to get the snakes to close their mouths; he had never imagined that something like this would result. As soon as he thought about how angry Li Qinghou would be when he saw the current state of the snakes, he began to tremble.

He ran anxiously back into the stone hut and began to concoct a medicinal pill. He produced vast amounts of medicinal plants, hoping to concoct some remedy to solve the problem. No longer

was he proudly complacent like before. Instead, he looked like he was about to cry, and frightened out of his mind. A few days later, he charged out of the stone hut, hair disheveled, eyes bloodshot.

He had three medicinal pills in his hand, which he had concocted over the past three sleepless days and nights. What he hoped was that these pills would calm the snakes down, and at least buy him some time to concoct a true antidote.

The scene which met his eyes as he emerged was shocking. All of the snakes were writhing and thrashing in complete madness. The stone walls were cracked and smashed, and many of the snakes were covered in bloody wounds.

Bai Xiaochun really was about ready to cry. He quickly tossed out the medicinal pills, which exploded in midair, causing a mist to spread out over the snakes. Almost immediately, they calmed down, and their wounds even began to heal....

A few days later, the snakes were still calm, and the thrashing behaviour hadn't returned. Finally, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief.

“You nearly scared Lord Bai to death! I thought something bad was going to happen. Humph! Well, with my skill in the Dao of medicine, this was pretty much a non-event!” Feeling very proud of himself, Bai Xiaochun was about to go about working on an antidote when he suddenly stopped in place and swallowed hard, looking at one particular snake off in the distance.

It was a cloudy-eyed death viper, and now that it had recovered completely, it began to emanate a shocking aura. The fluctuations were not that of the cultivation base, but rather, its fleshly body. It suddenly twitched, hitting a nearby boulder and smashing it to pieces.

Bai Xiaochun's widened. There were quite a few cloudy-eyed death vipers in the cave, and although their venom was deadly to the extreme, their bodies were relatively weak. They definitely shouldn't be this strong physically, and yet, his eyes weren't deceiving him.

Panting, he looked around at the other snakes, and sweat began to drip down his forehead.

"How is this possible?" he muttered hoarsely.

More snakes began to twitch, and then erupt with fleshly body power. They weren't thrashing about, and yet, even their slightest movement caused the ground to tremble. Boulders were shattered as if the snakes were whips in the hands of almighty beings, whips that could smash any obstacle to pieces.

They all possessed seemingly unlimited fleshly body power, and even worse, some of them were starting to head in his direction.

Before, the spell formation could stop them easily, but now it began to tremble and emanate cracking sounds. If that spell formation broke, Bai Xiaochun couldn't even imagine how he would possibly deal with so many infinitely powerful snakes.

It was then that the bloodgod cobra, which had an even stronger fleshly body than the other snakes, slammed into the spell formation. At the same time, the head of another snake appeared from the very depths of the cave. The snake stared at Bai Xiaochun with bulging eyes.

The head was enormous, roughly three meters long; as such, it was only possible to imagine how long the rest of the snake was. Terrified, Bai Xiaochun screamed and ran back into the stone hut to start concocting another temporary remedy.

## Chapter 114: Li Qinghou Understands....

---

“Why is this happening...?” On the verge of tears, he wiped the sweat off his forehead, gritted his teeth, and continued concocting, surrounded by the rumbling sounds from outside.

His goal had never been to cause a big disaster! He’d only wanted the snakes to close their mouths. He felt more wronged than ever....

He thought he’d come up with a very simple way to solve the problem; how could he ever have imagined that closing the snakes’ mouths would come with such violent side-effects?

Seeing that the situation was rapidly devolving, his first reaction was to create a temporary remedy to buy time so that he could then come up with an antidote. He’d solved the problem with the thrashing, but could never have imagined that as a result, the snakes’ fleshly bodies would become infinitely more powerful. From the look of things, the spell formation wouldn’t be able to hold out for much longer.

His heart pounded with fear, and his eyes were completely bloodshot; he simply wanted to get things back to the way they were, even if that meant having all the snakes hissing all the time.

Two days later, the cracking sounds from the spell formation were getting more intense under the constant bombardment of the snakes. Fissures were even starting to spread out across the shield. It was at that point that Bai Xiaochun ran out of the stone hut,

panting, holding two medicinal pills in his hands.

“This time I’m definitely going to remedy the situation!” he shouted. “10,000 Snakes Valley, it’s time to get back to normal!” The mental pressure recently had really begun to build, and he almost looked like he was in a trance as he hurled the medicinal pills out of the spell formation. High in the air, they exploded, transforming into a green mist that spread out in all directions.

As soon as the mist made contact with the snakes, they shivered, and then plopping sounds could be heard as they collapsed onto the ground, the power of their fleshly bodies rapidly decreasing.

The mist slowly spread throughout the entire cave, reaching even the bloodgod cobras. As they sagged listlessly, Bai Xiaochun heaved a sigh of relief. By this point, he felt the utmost respect for the Dao of medicine, and yet at the same time, immense pride over his level of control with it.

Taking a deep breath, he murmured, “Just like always, I–”

However, before he could finish speaking, he nearly jumped into the air when he saw what was happening to a nearby tri-recluse viper.

“Th-this... this....” he muttered, his eyes going wide with disbelief.

Unexpectedly, the tri-recluse viper began to writhe as a long horn

suddenly grew out from the top of its head.

“The snakes are growing horns!?!?” he cried in alarm. His mind rumbled as it was battered by massive waves of shock. All of the snakes were now writhing, and if they could hiss, the sound would surely be shocking to the soul.

Soon, all of the snakes had grown horns out from the tops of their heads! Furthermore, their bodies also seemed to be getting stronger.

In addition to the wondrous addition of the horn, they all began to thrash around again, as though the violence which had been suppressed earlier was finally able to explode out. As they smashed back and forth, they began to punch holes into the walls and burrow out of the cave itself.

Even the bloodgod cobra was acting the same way. As for the huge snake with the three-meter-long head, it was shaking violently as a huge horn grew out of its head. Although the horns didn't appear to be very sharp, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but gasp at the sight of them. The snakes were all starting to go mad, and before long, Bai Xiaochun realized that their skin was now virtually impenetrable.

All of the snakes were thrashing about violently, causing a mighty rumbling sound to explode out. Any of them who saw even the slightest hole in the wall would unleash all the mysterious power contained in their horns to try to burrow their way out of 10,000 Snakes Valley to freedom!

Although 10,000 Snakes Valley was located behind Fragrant Cloud Peak, the snakes actually had no specific destinations in mind, and began burrowing subterranean passages in all directions, even toward Violet Cauldron Peak and Green Crest Peak.

Only about thirty percent were actually heading in the direction of Fragrant Cloud Peak.

It was easy to imagine the scene which would result in the three mountains when innumerable snakes with sealed mouths burst out into the tunnels and began to charge about madly.

FLOP!

Bai Xiaochun dropped down to sit on the ground and look around at the empty cave.

“I’m... done....”

It didn’t take long before the snakes made their way through the cracks and fissures in the ground, all the way to the three mountains. Countless horned snakes with bulging eyes burrowed through any hole they could find, shocking countless disciples of the south bank. For years, things had been peaceful and quiet, but now, a massive commotion once again engulfed all the disciples.

On Green Crest Peak, outside of Spirit Sword Hall, more than a



thousand disciples were cheering on two of their fellows who were fighting in a minor competition. Just when one of them secured the upper hand and was about to win the match, a horn burst out from the ground beneath his feet, with a cloudy-eyed death viper following close behind. Everyone stared in shock as the snake instantly began to slither up the leg of the disciple who had been just about to win.

The disciple screamed and leaped up into the air. Next, more screams could be heard as more horned snakes burrowed up from the ground.

“What’s going on!?!? Why did they stop fighting?!”

“Heavens! Look at all the snakes.... What are all these snakes doing here? And look, they have horns!!”

“Dammit! What’s happening? What’s happening!?!? Not even my magical item can block these snakes!”

At the same time, on the summit of Green Crest Peak, where the Inner Sect disciples lived, an old time Inner Sect disciple was sitting in his immortal’s cave, cross-legged in meditation. Suddenly, the ground trembled, and the disciple’s eyes widened in disbelief. Then... he let out a bloodcurdling shriek.

“AIIEEEE! What is that thing?!?”

“A snake! A snake just burrowed out of the ground!!”

Similar cries echoed out from other immortal's caves. It was the same with Shangguan Tianyou's immortal's cave, although the maddened scream which emanated out from him seemed to come from an inner wound which had been reopened.

The situation was the same with the Outer Sect disciples. Countless snakes burrowed up out of the ground, to the profound shock and terror of all. Even the elders of Green Crest Peak were flabbergasted. The old peak lord flew up into the air, looking down in astonishment at the countless horned snakes which covered Green Crest Peak.

It was the same with Violet Cauldron Peak. Innumerable disciples shouted in fury, unleashing magical techniques in all directions. However, they didn't affect the snakes at all....

Lu Tianlei was surrounded by flashing electricity as he roared, pulling a horned snake out of his trousers. He tried to crush it, only to find that he couldn't.

“What happened? Dammit! Why are there so many snakes!?”

“Wait a second, something seems fishy here!!”

As the bellows of rage rose up from Violet Cauldron Peak and Green Crest Peak, Xu Meixiang bristled with fury.

“Investigate!” she bellowed. “Investigate immediately and find

out what exactly is happening!!”

On Fragrant Cloud Peak, enraged shouting rose up into the sky. Xu Baocai was screaming at the top of his lungs, and Zhou Xinqi’s eyes were wide with astonishment as she flew up into the air.

Hou Xiaomei and Hou Yunfei also took to flight. Many disciples there were whipped into an unbelievable fury, and although some began to unleash powerful magical techniques, Fragrant Cloud Peak was known for its skill with plants and vegetation. It was no surprise, therefore, that quite a few disciples whipped out medicinal pills, and quickly found that although the effects were rather ordinary, the snakes would immediately flee at the sight of them.

Many of the fleeing horned snakes then headed toward Green Crest Peak and Violet Cauldron Peak....

“What’s happening here? Dammit! What could have caused this!?!?”

“Is this a natural disaster or was it caused by humans? Bai Xiaochun was sentenced to stay in 10,000 Snakes Valley, and since then everything has been so peaceful. How could... wait a second! 10,000 Snakes Valley!?!? Bai Xiaochun is supposed to be in 10,000 Snakes Valley!!”

As people began to react, a long-eared rabbit suddenly appeared from out of nowhere. Apparently, it had been listening in for some time. All of a sudden, it began to run through the three mountains,

bellowing at the top of its lungs.

“Oh god, my butt!

“Dammit! I’m gonna kill this snake!!

“AIIIIIEEEE! From now on people are gonna laugh themselves to death at the name Xu Baocai!!

“Get lost, you evil snakes! I am Shangguan Tianyou, Inner Sect disciple and Chosen of Green Crest Peak. From this day forth, our enmity is irreconcilable....

“What an incredible snake. If I, Lu Tianlei, could become a snake, I would definitely go... heh heh....

“Li the Snake! Li the Swindler! When you tossed Lord Bai into this place, did you really think he couldn’t handle some measly snakes? You just wait until this treasured pill is finished being concocted, then I’ll teach your stupid little snakes a lesson. Humph! Who knows, after this, I might even be able to lead these snakes to conquer the world! Hahahahahaha!”

Soon, the rabbit’s words could be heard within all three of the mountains, and the disciples erupted into a fury.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Exterminate Bai Xiaochun!!”

“So, he did this! He sent the snakes against us in revenge!!”

The howls coming out of the mouths of Shangguan Tianyou and Lu Tianlei were especially barbaric. The disciples of the three mountains were in a complete fury; this disaster far exceeded the matter with the acid rain....

Li Qinghou looked around blankly at the events playing out. Then, he starting thinking about everything that had occurred after Bai Xiaochun first joined the sect.

As a servant, he had sold spots into the Outer Sect, arousing public wrath. He had thrown the entire servants' district into chaos.

When he was an Outer Sect disciple, there was the tragedy of the spirit tail chickens, and the terrible incident with Elder Zhou's phoenix. Countless disciples were affected, and the entire mountain had been thrown into chaos.

After becoming an Inner Sect disciple, he had provoked lightning, sent crazy animals running around the entire mountain, and had even caused acid rain.... By then, he had thrown all three mountains into chaos.

However, no matter how Li Qinghou thought about the matter, he could never have imagined that throwing Bai Xiaochun into

10,000 Snakes Valley would result in something so preposterous.... He didn't even hold back when it came to snakes. 10,000 Snakes Valley had been thrown into chaos, which then spread to cover all of the south bank.

As of that moment, Li Qinghou suddenly remembered how, when he had first met Bai Xiaochun, all of the villagers at the bottom of the mountain had cheered and thrown a party upon his departure....

Finally, he understood how those villagers felt....

# Chapter 115: No! Don't Spread That!

---

Not a single snake was left in 10,000 Snakes Valley. Bai Xiaochun stood there inside the spell formation, looking around at the surrounding emptiness. Suddenly, a tremor ran through him as everything around him began to quake violently. Screaming, he shot out at top speed through the mouth of the cave.

His scalp was numb, and he was shaking; he knew that this time... the chaos he had unleashed was too severe. All of the snakes in 10,000 Snakes Valley had escaped, and the mere thought shook him to his core.

“I’m done for. Finished. Kaput....” On the verge of tears, he raced out of 10,000 Snakes Valley, where he instantly caught wind of the countless enraged shouts coming from the three mountain peaks. Furthermore, he heard numerous people calling his name.

Tugging at his hair, he couldn’t stop thinking that he really was innocent in the whole affair, maligned to the extreme.

“I really didn’t do it on purpose.... I was just... I was just trying to make the snakes a bit cuter, that’s all.” He was sniffing a bit, and his heart was pounding. If he had the power, he would instantly change his appearance so that no one could recognize him.

“What do I do?” he murmured to himself. “What do I do...? There’s nothing left to do. I can only go to Master’s cave and hide. Nobody will think to look for me there....” With that, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a new set of clothes. After changing,

wings sprouted from his back, and he sped as fast as he could move toward Mount Daoseed.

The three mountains were in the grip of pandemonium. Howls and roars echoed out constantly. Bai Xiaochun deeply regretted having become so famous recently. Virtually everyone knew him, so all he could do was duck his head down and speed along as quickly as possible. As he moved along, if the wind even moved a branch, he would avoid it for fear it was someone about to pop out and see him.

Of course, because of the general chaos, nobody noticed him passing. Everyone was in the middle of fleeing from the horned snakes. When Bai Xiaochun saw how maddened everyone was, his heart began to pound. However, he managed to take advantage of the chaos to speed to Mount Daoseed without being noticed. He arrived out of breath, fear lingering in his heart. Moments later, he was approaching the cave in which his Master had passed away into meditation.

To other people, it was a restricted area, but Bai Xiaochun could come and go as he wished. A cloud of dust rose up into the air behind him as he raced into the cave and dropped to the ground in front of his master's portrait.

"I really didn't do it on purpose...." he said, sniffing. "Master, you know I'm a good person, right?" Bai Xiaochun looked up miserably at the image of his Master, a smiling man who had the demeanor of a transcendent being.

By this point, the elders of the three mountains had sprung into



action. Li Qinghou, Xu Meixiang, the sect leader, and even the peak lord of Green Crest Peak all appeared. Under their leadership, they managed to capture all of the horned snakes. Soon, the three mountains began to calm down.

After the Foundation Establishment cultivators ended the snakepocalypse, the disciples of the three mountains, a massive mob of tens of thousands of people, all charged toward 10,000 Snakes Valley, bursting with anger. Seeing how the valley had been almost completely destroyed, and unable to find any traces of Bai Xiaochun, they quickly expanded the search to cover the rest of the south bank.

There was no organization of the affair; everyone instinctively took to action. Thankfully for Bai Xiaochun, he had reacted quickly, otherwise he would quickly have been apprehended.

“Take Bai Xiaochun down!!”

“And that talking rabbit too! That thing has to die!”

“Take Bai Xiaochun down! Take the talking rabbit down!”

After several hours passed, the entire area had been turned upside down, and yet nobody had seen a single trace of Bai Xiaochun. The disciples’ eyes were turning bright red, and some of them even left the sect to search outside, their anger building.

“We’re going to find you, Bai Xiaochun!”

“Even if you run to the ends of the earth, we’ll track you down!”

“Dammit! Where could he possibly be hiding!?” Countless roars echoed out in all directions, gradually reaching the ears of Bai Xiaochun on Mount Daoseed, who shivered constantly.

“Hey, I got screwed here too! It’s all that damn rabbit’s fault. I-I-I... I didn’t want any of this!” Bai Xiaochun sat there nervously, sighing constantly. After waiting for some time, and having noticed that the uproar outside seemed to have died down a bit, he looked at the portrait of his Master, heart pounding. Then he began to kowtow.

“Master, sir, please bless and protect me, and prevent those villains from finding me....” After some time passed, he crept up to the mouth of the cave, and after ensuring the shouting outside had indeed died down, breathed a sigh of relief.

“Bai Xiaochun’s wits come out on top again!” he said with a chuckle. “Nobody will ever think to come looking for me in my master’s cave.

“But this isn’t really a solution. I’ll have to leave eventually.... What do I do, what do I do...?” Suddenly, he had the feeling that someone was watching him. He looked back toward the mouth of the cave, and saw... the talking rabbit, its ears swiveled to point directly at him.

In the instant that he saw the rabbit, his eyes went wide. How

could he ever have imagined that the thing could move with such unbelievable stealth? It had actually managed to enter even this restricted area. All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun thought back to what he had just been saying to himself, and all his hair stood on end. Shrieking miserably, he cried out, “No! Don’t spread that....”

But then, a whooshing sound could be heard as the rabbit vanished. An instant later, it was far off in the distance, crying out its usual repertoire of passages. However, a new one had been added onto the end.

“Master, sir, please bless and protect me, and prevent those villains from finding me....

“Bai Xiaochun’s wits come out on top again! Nobody will ever think to come looking for me in my master’s cave.

“But this isn’t really a solution. I’ll have to leave eventually.... What do I do, what do I do...?”

“No! Don’t spread that....”

Bai Xiaochun felt as if he had just been struck by lightning. He stood there mutely, watching the rabbit vanish into the distance, shouting as it ran along. His mind began to spin.

“Damn that rabbit!” he raged. “I’m gonna skin it alive!!”

By this point, the disciples of the south bank had searched just

about everywhere, but hadn't found a single trace of Bai Xiaochun. Eventually, they began to suppress their wrath and speculate about where exactly he might be.

“Where could Bai Xiaochun be hiding? The whole sect has been searching, and there's not even a record of him leaving the area. That means he definitely has to be on the south bank.

“Fragrant Cloud Peak. Green Crest Peak. Violet Cauldron Peak. We've searched every nook and cranny, every mansion and immortal's cave!!”

“We even turned the servants district inside out. Don't tell me Bai Xiaochun burrowed underground somewhere?!?”

However, even as their wrath burned hot, a rabbit suddenly appeared, running along at top speed and calling out at the top of its lungs. When it got to the last line, it sounded particularly despairing.

“No! Don't spread that....”

When people heard it, their jaws dropped, and their heads turned to look in the direction of the rabbit. As for the people like Shangguan Tianyou and Lu Tianlei, they clenched their fists and burst into motion. Other disciples threw their heads back and laughed uproariously.

“Good rabbit!!”

“That rabbit is a real mischief-maker, but it’s finally gone and done something good!”

“Fine, I won’t kill that rabbit today. Instead, I’ll kill Bai Xiaochun....”

Soon, tens of thousands of disciples were streaming toward Mount Daoseed, fists clenched tightly, murderous auras raging.

Bai Xiaochun sat there in the cave, burning with hatred toward the talking rabbit. He hated it even more than he hated Elder Zhou’s phoenix. Trembling, he was just about to set to flight, when he heard a huge commotion further down the mountain. Looking down, he saw countless figures speeding in his direction. Scalp tingling, he backed up to hide as deep as he could in the cave.

“I’m done for. Finished. Kaput....” As he sat there in front of his Master’s portrait, he suddenly started to get very angry.

“Master, can’t you help me, sir? Send your soul down, otherwise... I, a Prestige disciple who has shed my own blood for the sect will be beaten to– what?” In his moment of despair, he glanced up at the portrait, and suddenly, his eyes began to shine. He slapped his thigh.

“Hahaha! Many thanks for your reminder, Master. Disciple understands!”

It was at around this time that Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong was presiding over a meeting in the great hall atop Mount Daoseed. The peak lords of the south bank and all the elders were all there, and all of them had serious looks on their faces.

They had already been there for two hours, during which time Zheng Yuandong had been explaining his thoughts regarding Bai Xiaochun.

“Sect leader, please reconsider carefully. J-Junior... Junior Brother Bai has astounding innate talent. Assigning him to the south bank is a real waste!”

“That’s right. Junior Brother Bai might have you as his Senior Brother, sect leader, but we’re all a big family. We know that you aren’t taking sides. A genius cultivator like that should definitely be placed in a position with greater prospects, like the north bank. That’s where Junior Brother Bai can truly unleash his heavenly talent!”

It wasn’t just the three peak lords who were going on in this manner, the elders joined in as well.

The headache Zheng Yuandong was experiencing couldn’t be more bitter. The Spirit Stream Sect had been quiet for two years; how could he ever have imagined the Bai Xiaochun would be the source of so much turmoil? This time, the disaster of 10,000 Snakes Valley left him thoroughly convinced of how good Bai Xiaochun was at causing disasters.

He had the feeling that since Bai Xiaochun was a disciple of the south bank, and had already caused the trouble he had, things probably couldn't get much worse. On the other hand, if he reassigned him to the north bank... it was likely that the next time he had a meeting like this, it would be with the peak lords and elders of both banks together.

Clearing his throat, he said, "Junior Brother Bai might be naughty and mischievous, but he is a Prestige disciple. Ahem. He's also very young. Let's leave him on the south bank. I have a lot of faith in you south bank people."

Eyes bloodshot, Elder Zhou looked over and said, "Sect leader, we beg of you...."

Li Qinghou clasped hands toward Zheng Yuandong. Sighing, he said, "Sect leader, Xiaochun has been practicing the Waterswamp Kingdom. To truly understand that technique, he really should go to the north bank to observe many different types of beasts. In the past 10,000 years, not many people have succeeded in it. Furthermore, after joining the sect, Bai Xiaochun now only lacks a life essence spirit. I think... going to the north bank would be for the best."

"That's right!" said the peak lord from Green Crest Peak. "Sect leader, Bai Xiaochun cultivates the Waterswamp Kingdom, and he's an official Chosen, on the verge of true enlightenment. Looking back at the history of the Spirit Stream Sect, he's truly in a unique position!"

"Sect leader," Elder Zhou said, "please don't interfere with

Junior Brother Bai's progress. It could be a loss the likes of which the sect hasn't sustained in 10,000 years!" All of the other elders joined in to express their agreement.

Seeing how intent everyone was, Zheng Yuandong knew that clinging to his original idea wouldn't be easy. After a moment of hesitation, he smiled wryly and prepared to come up with another way to refuse them. However, it was at that point that a disciple called out from outside the hall.

"Sect leader, something bad is happening.... Sect Uncle Bai is in the patriarch's cave.... He's... he's...."

Jaws dropped within the hall, and numerous streams of divine sense flew out toward the cave. When they saw the situation, strange expressions appeared on their faces. Zheng Yuandong immediately had a bad feeling. When his divine sense entered the cave, his eyes went so wide they almost bulged out of his skull. Then, a tremor of rage erupted within him.

"That little brat! Fine. I accept your proposal. Send him to the north bank!!"



# Chapter 116: The Founder Appears!!

---

On Mount Daoseed, the cave where Bai Xiaochun's Master had been interred was surrounded by tens of thousands of disciples, all of whom were glaring daggers. It was a restricted area, but the fact that they came as part of such a huge mob gave them the courage to enter.

“Bai Xiaochun, get the hell out here right now!”

“Show your face!!”

“Bai Xiaochun, you villainous scoundrel, god will punish you this day! We will punish you this day!”

However, even as the sound of their voices rang out, someone inside the cave itself bellowed, “Pipe down!”

The powerful shout was backed by the full power of Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base, causing it to echo out like thunder, completely crushing the sound of all other voices.

Simultaneously, the slender Bai Xiaochun appeared, striding solemnly out of the cave.

When the congregated disciples of the three mountain peaks saw him, they immediately hefted the rocks they held in their hands, angrily preparing to pelt him. But then, Bai Xiaochun let out a powerful shout and thrust a portrait out in front of him.

It was the portrait of his Master.... It was also Zheng Yuandong's Master, the founding patriarch of the Spirit Stream Sect.

Although somewhat nervous, Bai Xiaochun bellowed, "What gall! If anyone dares to harm the portrait of my Master, Elder Brother Sect Leader and I will fight you to the death!"

When the mob saw Bai Xiaochun crouching behind the portrait of his master, they went stiff, and many of them gasped. Not a single one dared to hurl a rock.

That portrait depicted the founding patriarch of the sect, the Master of the sect leader himself. If any of them dared to harm it, it could only be imagined how wrathfully Zheng Yuandong would respond. Furthermore, it was certain that not a single peak lord would interfere.

The disciples were so enraged they were about to blow their tops, and yet, they didn't dare to do a thing. "Completely shameless!!"

Seeing that his tactic was working, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. Holding the portrait high, he glared around at the mob.

"You people listen and listen well. I really didn't do it on purpose, I--"

If Bai Xiaochun hadn't tried to explain the situation, things would have gone much smoother. But as soon as he opened his

mouth, the crowd started to lose control.

“Y-y-you, you always say you didn’t do it on purpose! Fragrant Cloud Peak got attacked by lightning, and you said it wasn’t on purpose. Violet Cauldron Peak and Green Crest Peak got drenched with acid rain, and it wasn’t on purpose. And now you’re saying the same thing again!”

“This is ridiculous !!”

Bai Xiaochun quickly waved around the portrait of his master. Sounding genuinely apologetic, he continued, “My Master just visited me in a dream and told me he forgives me! I guarantee, this is the last time. There absolutely, positively won’t be another–”

To hear Bai Xiaochun shamelessly claim that his deceased Master had visited him in his dreams enraged the crowd even further.

“I can’t take this anymore! I’m gonna beat him black and blue!”

“Even if he was the sect leader’s son, I’d still beat the crap out of him!”

“Take Bai Xiaochun down!!”

It was at this point that numerous streams of Foundation Establishment divine sense suddenly swept across the area.

Moments later, several dozen people flew down from the summit of Mount Daoseed. There were elders of the various mountains, peak lords, and even Zheng Yuandong.

Seeing what was happening, Zheng Yuandong shouted in a rage-filled voice that echoed like thunder: “Leave this place immediately!!”

The ear-splitting sound of his voice struck fear into the hearts of everyone present, even Shangguan Tianyou and the other Chosen. Trembling in fear, they withdrew.

Bai Xiaochun’s spirits were rising rapidly. He was just about to say something when Zheng Yuandong looked over at him with a ferocious glare.

“Bai Xiaochun, as your Elder Brother, I won’t let anyone else beat you, but I can certainly give you a thrashing!” With that, he shot in Bai Xiaochun’s direction. Bai Xiaochun’s scalp began to tingle so hard it felt like it might explode. He was just about to brandish the portrait of his master when Zheng Yuandong swished his sleeve, causing the portrait to fly over to him.

Bai Xiaochun let out a shriek, and a pair of wings sprouted out behind him as he prepared to flee. However, before he could get very far, a powerful smacking sound rang out, which was Zheng Yuandong’s palm making contact with his rear end.

Searing pain swept through him, and he screamed. Looking like he was about to cry, he shrieked, “Save me, Uncle Li! My Elder

Brother's trying to kill me!!”

Li Qinghou's eyelid twitched, and he pretended not to have heard. Zheng Yuandong's fury had not been sated in the least; seeing Bai Xiaochun waving around the portrait of his master had him fuming, so next, he unleashed a kick.

Bai Xiaochun screamed again, sounding even more anguished than before.

“Save me, Master! Save me!!”

Seeing Zheng Yuandong beating Bai Xiaochun caused the anger among the onlookers to slowly fade. Soon, strange expressions appeared on the faces of the elders, and they began to cough dryly.

“This is a personal matter with the sect leader and his family....”

“Right, right. Oh, I have some medicinal pills in the furnace, I'll take my leave now.” Hiding their smiles, the elders began to disperse.

Soon, only Li Qinghou and Xu Meixiang were left hovering in midair. As Li Qinghou watched Bai Xiaochun off in the distance, he seemed a bit emotional. After all, he had high expectations for Bai Xiaochun.

Xu Meixiang looked over at Li Qinghou, her gaze soft. “In his heart, he views you as his father,” she said softly. “Are you really

willing to abandon him to the north bank?”

Li Qinghou shifted his gaze from Bai Xiaochun to Xu Meixiang. Shaking his head slightly, he said, “All the things Xiaochun did don’t really matter. Deep down, he’s a good person. Furthermore, I can tell that he really is sorry for everything.... Sending him to the north bank as punishment isn’t really necessary.

“But I was being honest with what I said to the sect leader earlier. Ever since he got the Waterswamp Kingdom from the north bank, I’ve been thinking about the matter. Bai Xiaochun’s latent talent is superb. The ideal situation would be for him to combine the best aspects of both banks. Besides, if he can successfully cultivate the Waterswamp Kingdom, and reach the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation within a few years, well... then maybe we can accelerate the opening of the Fallen Sword Abyss. In that case, he might be able to forge a new path for himself.”

“The Fallen Sword Abyss?” Xu Meixiang replied, looking shocked. “One of the three Holy Lands of the Four Great Sects in the eastern Lower Reaches of the Heavenspan River.... Supposedly, there are even traces of heavenstring energy there. Whenever we open it, all of the Four Great Sects of the eastern reaches, the Blood Stream Sect, the Pill Stream Sect, the Profound Stream Sect, and our Spirit Stream Sect, will send in disciples from the tenth level of Qi Condensation to participate in a bloody struggle....”

“That bloody struggle is necessary....” Li Qinghou said with a light sigh. “If he doesn’t master the Waterswamp Kingdom, I won’t let him go. But if he does, then he absolutely must go. Cultivation is a long, blood-soaked path. Only the fit survive and

prosper. He needs to learn to deal with that, not shirk from it.” With that, the two of them turned and left.

That day, Bai Xiaochun’s screams filled the sect. Zheng Yuandong was dead set on teaching him a lesson, not as the sect leader, but as his Elder Brother.

Late that night, Bai Xiaochun, his nose bloodied and his face swollen, trudged along behind Zheng Yuandong as they returned to their Master’s cave.

“On your knees!” Zheng Yuandong said, glaring. “Apologize to Master!” Bai Xiaochun was so frightened that he immediately plopped down to his knees in front of the portrait.

“Master, I apologize....” Bai Xiaochun felt so swollen he thought he might burst at any moment, especially his buttocks. “Master,” he continued, on the verge of tears, “when all of those disciples came to beat me up, you felt sorry for me, and visited me in a dream. Sir, I tried to tell Elder Brother, but he didn’t believe me....

“Master, why don’t you visit Elder Brother in his dreams tonight, and tell him the truth...?” Zheng Yuandong stood off to the side, unsure of whether to laugh or cry. He had a mind to beat him, but when he thought about how terrifyingly tough Bai Xiaochun’s skin was, his hand ached a bit, and he held back.

“Kneel here for three months,” he said. “That’s your punishment for the disaster of 10,000 Snakes Valley!” He had no other choice but to do this, for the sake of the disciples of the three mountain

peaks. With that, he gave a cold harrumph, and then swished his sleeve, causing a medicinal pill to tumble out. Pretending he hadn't noticed the pill, he turned and left.

Seeing that Zheng Yuandong was leaving, Bai Xiaochun immediately let out an anguished cry. He was about to start complaining to his Master about everything, but first, he looked around to make sure that the miraculously stealthy rabbit wasn't around.

“Oh, woe is me, Master....

“Elder Brother beat me so hard... my butt hurts so bad. Look. Look! I'm swollen all over!

“This is so unfair! I really didn't do any of it on purpose.... I didn't... huh?” It was at this point that he noticed a medicinal pill on the ground, which was none other than the pill Zheng Yuandong had just left behind.

“A high-grade tier-three Energy Building Pill!”

Eyes shining, he quickly looked around outside the cave, then sat down off to the side. Feeling a bit bored, he consumed the pill and then began to focus on cultivation.

About that time, something happened that none of the disciples or even the peak lords in the sect noticed. Behind Mount Daoseed, in a wide-open, empty area, everything suddenly began to distort.



Moments later, the distortions vanished. However, what was now faintly visible, right there behind Mount Daoseed, was... another mountain peak!

It was... the ninth mountain peak of the Spirit Stream Sect. Although the sect leader was aware of its existence, even he hadn't noticed the strange distortions from moments before.

The ninth mountain peak of the Spirit Stream Sect was incomparably quiet and peaceful, and all of the plants and vegetation that covered it were pitch black. At the summit of the mountain, atop a black peach tree, was a monkey, sitting there quietly, mixed emotions visible in its eyes.

If Bai Xiaochun were there, he would recognize it instantly. Astonishingly... it was the same thoughtful monkey that had eaten one of his strange pills, and that he had released into the wild some time ago.

Eventually, the monkey sighed.

"I know you're there," he said. "Might as well stop hiding."

As soon as the monkey spoke, the air behind him distorted, and an old man appeared, tall, wearing a long violet robe. He stepped out of thin air, looking almost like an ordinary mortal, with seemingly no cultivation base power whatsoever emanating off of him. At the same time, however, he almost looked like a Paragon, standing right there!

A strange expression appeared on the old man's face as he came to stand off to the side. A moment later, a third eye opened on his forehead, and he looked down at the monkey. "You are...?"

The monkey turned to look at the old man, eyes gleaming with profound light. "You don't recognize me, my apprentice? Or perhaps I should call you the founding patriarch of the Spirit Stream Sect?"

Astonishingly, this old man was the same person who had led the Spirit Stream Sect to its position as one of the Four Great Sects, its founding patriarch! Currently, he seemed to be in a state of shock. Pupils constricting, he took a deep breath, disbelief flashing across his face.

"Impossible. You... you died! What are you doing back?!?!?"

Despite his status in the sect, his cultivation base, and his level of willpower, he couldn't help but gasp. Deep down inside, in the depths of his soul, he was sure that this was indeed his enigmatic Master who had passed away 10,000 years ago.

The monkey said nothing. He looked over at Mount Daoseed, and his gaze passed through the mountain into a cave, where Bai Xiaochun sat meditating. Although no one would ever be able to tell, within the monkey's eyes could be seen... a rare trace of reverence.

"I'm not sure how I came to be here. Perhaps it was young Bai

Xiaochun's medicinal pill. Or perhaps... some other mysterious force guided his hand... to bring me back. In any case, I am not the only one to have returned."

The violet-robed old man followed the monkey's line of sight to Mount Daoseed, and saw Bai Xiaochun sitting there.

"A Qi Condensation disciple? How could he have done this!?" The old man still couldn't quite believe what was happening.

"Frigidsect!" the monkey barked. "Do you remember why I gave you that name?! Do you remember why your Master gave you such a heaven-defying mission? Why I ensured that you could exist for 10,000 years?! Answer me!" The monkey's eyes shone with a piercing, menacing light. It even seemed as though thunder were rumbling in the area. However, the effects were apparently confined to a thirty meter area around them. Not even the other patriarchs on the ninth mountain peak were aware of anything strange.

The violet-robed old man, the founding patriarch of the Spirit Stream Sect, shivered slightly as he recalled memories from 10,000 ago. Despite how many years had passed, he remembered things clearly. He was old, but with his Master here in front of him, he suddenly felt like a young man again. He stood straight and tall, his face flushed a bit, looking almost like a soldier as he responded, "Sir, I remember. My mission is to guard the true spirit, to ensure that the Spirit Stream Sect becomes one of the sects in the Middle Reaches of the eastern Heavenspan River, and then, a sect of the Upper Reaches. After that, we must invade the northern Heavenspan River, fight our way through its Upper Reaches, and

eradicate the Nine Heavens Cloudthunder Sect. Return to our ancestral home, restore the glory of the Frigid School Spirit Society!”

“So, you do remember our ancestral home, and the true spirit,” the monkey said, a strange look in its eyes. “Well then, take a look at the magical symbol beneath Fragrant Cloud Peak!”

Frigidsect looked over at Fragrant Cloud Peak and immediately frowned. Hidden within each of the eight mountain peaks of the Spirit Stream Sect was a complex magical symbol, which collectively were the lifeblood of the Spirit Stream Sect. The extreme importance of those magical symbols was difficult to describe with words.

However, Frigidsect didn’t notice anything out of the ordinary about Fragrant Cloud Peak’s magical symbol.

The monkey sighed softly, and the profound look in his eyes grew even stronger.

“You can’t see it, huh...? It seems I came back a bit too late. Someone else returned before me and sent their dark disciple to use the variations of plants and vegetation... to alter the spell formation.

“The primeval magical symbol beneath Fragrant Cloud Peak was tampered with, and reversing the situation with my current power wasn’t really possible. The only thing I could do was use what little strength I have left at my disposal to guide Bai Xiaochun into

inciting the spirit snakes. Then things can recover naturally.”

## Chapter 117: Frigid School Medicine Manual!

“The hard part about damaging the Fragrant Cloud Peak symbol would be finding a way to do it without you noticing,” the monkey said grimly. “Using the right method, even a Qi Condensation disciple could do it, given enough time. The south bank has been infiltrated!”

Frigidsect's eyes shone with a cold light. He well knew that damaging the spell formation could be done easily, but that repairing it was the opposite. It was like a flower vase. Even a child could smash it, but only a professional, a grandmaster, would be able to put it back together!

“Infiltrated....” Frigidsect thought for a moment, then reached out toward Mount Daoseed and made a grasping motion. A moment later, a jade slip flew toward him and came to rest in his hand. Within were well-kept records of everything that had occurred in the sect during the past thirty years. That included all of the information about Bai Xiaochun, complete with accounts detailing the lightning, the acid rain, and the pill concocting incident in 10,000 Snakes Valley.

After examining it, a strange expression appeared on his face. From the look of things, Bai Xiaochun seemed like a walking disaster.... However, it only took a moment for Frigidsect's eyes to glitter.

“This kid's pill concocting... it's vile....”

“The Dao of medicine has myriad paths,” the monkey murmured in response, “a different version for everyone. Perhaps this Bai Xiaochun can.... Fine. Give him the pill formula for the River-Defying Pill, as well as the Frigid School Medicine Manual. Perhaps he actually has a chance to concoct... the River-Defying Pill....”

Frigidsect’s eyes widened. The River-Defying Pill hadn’t been successfully concocted by anyone in the Spirit Stream Sect during the past 10,000 years. The Spirit Stream Sect had even sought aid from the Pill Stream Sect, and paid handsomely, but to no avail.

The River-Defying Pill was nothing more than a legend at this point. If it weren’t for the fact that the Spirit Stream Sect still happened to possess a single River-Defying Pill, Frigidsect might not even believe it was possible to concoct it. It was a medicine that had only one function... to awaken the true spirit! Awaken the true spirit for ten breaths of time!

As for the Frigid School Medicine Manual, it was one of the three great foundation legacies of the Frigid School Spirit Society, which contained a great Dao of medicine that supposedly came from an outside world.

After a moment of silence, Frigidsect nodded. “His pill concocting methods are vile, and the River-Defying Pill is a vile medicinal pill. Perhaps... he has a shot at concocting it! Master, what about your cultivation base...?”

“It won’t be recovered easily. I need time. Now that I’m back, I have to continue to endure for a few more years. I want to personally see... the destruction of the Nine Heavens

Cloudthunder Sect!” The monkey’s eyes flickered with animosity. Many years ago, he had watched his entire sect wiped out, with him being the only survivor. After passing through numerous areas forbidden to spirits, he barely managed to make it to the eastern river delta.

“Apprentice, I am not the only one to have returned. Other old-timers might also be back. I’m not sure why, but I have the feeling... that a new age might be upon us.”

The monkey sighed, and Frigidsect stood there silently. Although they were both ancient, their spirits burned hot, and they were completely focused.

Time passed. A month later, Bai Xiaochun had just finished a cultivation session in the cave. He wanted to go out, but knew that he couldn’t. Sighing, he continued to do breathing exercises.

Suddenly, he opened his eyes, and before he could take another breath, realized that a jade slip and a bamboo scroll were laying there in front of him.

They looked extremely ancient, as though they had existed for countless years. They almost seemed to radiate a primeval air.

“Eee?” After looking a bit closer, he picked up the jade slip and poured some spiritual power into it. After a moment, his eyes went wide.



“River-Defying Pill? It doesn’t need any plants or vegetation, only water from the Heavenspan River? What.. what kind of medicinal pill is this? It looks pretty incredible. Who ever thought that you could concoct medicinal pills from Heavenspan River water?” After examining the concoction method a bit further, he gasped.

“How vile! You actually have to use your body as a pill furnace....” Next, he looked over at the bamboo scroll, and his eyes went even wider.

“Frigid School Medicine Manual?

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and opened the bamboo scroll. None of it made any sense to him. Only the first line of text was clear, and yet, even that little bit was enough to drive Bai Xiaochun mad. “Immortality begins with the Frigid School; Eternal life ends the cycle of reincarnation!

“Don’t tell me... don’t tell me that this medicine manual can be used to concoct a Live-Forever Never-Die Pill!? AHHHHHHHHH!” He couldn’t hold back the shriek that echoed out of his mouth. His eyes were as bloodshot as if he had just obtained the most precious of treasures.

“Elder Brother Sect Leader must have noticed how hard I’ve been working at my cultivation, and decided to give me a reward. You’re so awesome, Elder Brother Sect Leader. This River-Defying Pill is a mere trifle. Once I’m a bit stronger, I’ll concoct a thousand of them for you.” Looking very excited, he continued to study the Frigid School Medicine Manual. Although he couldn’t see any of

the other information inside, he was already obsessed with it.

After studying it for a while, he realized that the bamboo which had been used to make the scroll emanated an ancient aura which had to be over 10,000 years old.

He wasn't even sure how bamboo could survive for so long. On top of that, it contained a sweet aroma that caused his cultivation base to rotate rapidly after inhaling it.

Bai Xiaochun only continued to get more excited, and was even more certain that this was a very precious item. In fact, he even started to wonder if his diligent cultivation really had attracted the attention of the sect leader, or whether it was the spirit of his Master, bestowing gifts upon him from the underworld.

“That's not very likely....” he thought. Gritting his teeth, he stopped thinking about it. After all, the treasure was in his hands now, so it belonged to him.

What he didn't notice was that behind him, deeper in the cave, was a monkey, standing there looking at him with reverence in its eyes.

“Just how did he do it...?” thought the monkey. “Did some mysterious entity really guide his hands to bring me back...?”

After some time passed, the monkey turned and merged into the stone wall of the cave. There, he sank down through the

mountain... until he was deep beneath the bank of the river.

He found himself in an enormous subterranean cavern. Down below flowed the golden waters of the Heavenspan River, and an enormous spell formation filled the entire cavern. This spell formation was the nucleus of the entire Spirit Stream Sect.

It wasn't an offensive spell formation, it was solely... defensive.

In the middle of the golden river water was a coffin.

It had no cover, and visible inside of it... was the corpse of a baby girl.

Despite being a corpse, the girl seemed to contain signs of life, as well as a profoundly ancient air....

Two months flashed by.

Although Bai Xiaochun was frustrated that he couldn't understand any of the Frigid School Medicine Manual, he refused to give up, and was sure that once his medicine concocting skill improved, he would understand.

Now that his punishment was over, he emerged from the cave in high spirits. His cultivation base had even advanced a bit. Soon, he received notice that he would be sent to the north bank to observe a host of beasts and improve his Waterswamp Kingdom.

“The north bank....” Shocked, he looked north and thought about the Chosen battles, and how he had been named the archenemy of the north bank. After a moment of hesitation, he murmured, “Ah, it’s been so long, everybody probably forgot about that already.”

Although he didn’t seem very confident in that analysis, there was nothing he could do about the matter. After thinking about it a bit longer, his eyes began to shine with anticipation. After all, his bag of holding still contained that Beastbirth Seed, and the thought of being able to finally have his own beast made the idea of going to the north bank more tolerable.

After returning to Fragrant Cloud Peak, he went to his destroyed immortal’s cave to pack his bags. Three days later, he stood there on Mount Daoseed, surrounded by the elders, peak lords, Inner Sect disciples, and quite a group of Outer Sect disciples, all of whom were there to see him off.

They had all come of their own volition. Only by personally witnessing Bai Xiaochun go to the north bank could they finally rest at ease.

Bai Xiaochun was moved to see that so many people had come to see them off. As he stood there next to the sect leader, he waved his hand in farewell.

“Ladies and gentlemen, fellow disciples, I’m going to the north bank, and I shall miss all of you! I shall miss the south bank, and I

shall miss all of the plants and vegetation.”

Strange looks appeared on the faces of those present. After all, this was a somber farewell. Even the sect leader and the peak lords were present. Although most of the disciples were still angry with Bai Xiaochun, they still tried to look as though they didn't want him to go.

The only people who truly felt bad were Big Fatty Zhang, Hou Xiaomei, and Hou Yunfei, along with a few other people he was truly close to. However, the south and north banks were both part of the Spirit Stream Sect, so the feelings weren't overwhelming.

Elder Zhou walked out from the crowd and looked warmly at Bai Xiaochun. “Junior Brother Bai, you have spectacular talent, and are just beginning to make headway with the Waterswamp Kingdom. Don't try to convince us you aren't set on pulling off a miracle, and succeed in cultivating it. The north bank has better resources than we do here on the south bank. Continuing your cultivation there will be much better for you in the long run. In fact, you'll have an even greater chance of reaching Foundation Establishment there. When that happens, your longevity will increase.”

Bai Xiaochun shivered, and his eyes shone with delight at the idea of reaching Foundation Establishment and increasing his longevity.

Soon, others began to call out.

“It’s time to leave. Turn, and walk over to the north bank. We cultivators are always moving forward, never going backward. There’s no need to look behind. Simply strive onward!”

“That’s right, Sect Uncle Bai. It’s time to leave. With dreams as big as yours, the north bank really is the only place where you can spread your wings and soar!”

“Sect Uncle Bai, there’s no need for you to miss us here, and once you get to the north bank, there’s no need to come back. Your path is always in front of you!” Upon hearing such words, Bai Xiaochun felt even more moved.

Taking a breath, he clasped hands and bowed deeply to everyone. The sect leader looked on with an odd expression until Bai Xiaochun turned, and the two of them headed toward the north bank....

After he was gone, the warm expression on Elder Zhou’s face turned into one of excitement, and it was the same with the surrounding disciples. Many people were so happy they started crying.

“The heavens do have eyes! Bai Xiaochun is finally gone!!”

“Hahahahahaha! The sect leader has bestowed favor upon us! The peak lords are wise and magnanimous! The Dao of the heavens truly is just! Spring has finally arrived for the south bank!!”

“Is this real? Is Bai Xiaochun finally gone!? Do I dare to believe that it’s true?” Everyone began to cheer, and some people even took out drums and cymbals and began banging and clashing them loudly.

On the north side of Mount Daoseed, Bai Xiaochun trailed behind the sect leader as they walked along. When he heard the racket behind him, he cleared his throat, and a strange expression appeared on his face. Something about the whole situation seemed familiar. He sighed.

“Can you hear that, Elder Brother Sect Leader? The south bank misses me so much that my departure has sent them wild with grief.”

Zheng Yuandong’s jaw dropped, and he looked up quietly into the sky....

# Chapter 118: Not A Warm Welcome....

---

The Spirit Stream Sect consisted of eight mountain peaks. Other than Mount Daoseed in the middle, there were three mountain peaks on the south bank and four on the north bank. Those four were Sunset Peak, Archway Peak, Irispetal Peak, and Ghostfang Peak.

The number of disciples on the north bank vastly exceeded that on the south bank. Any one of the north bank mountain peaks' Outer Sects would have tens of thousands of disciples. As for their Inner Sects, they usually had over a thousand.

Overall, the north bank was about twice as powerful as the south bank. It was for that reason that the north bank had long since come to be the leading force in the sect.

Of course, the foundation of north bank's power came in the form of the battle beasts that all disciples there raised. The vast numbers of beasts there ensured that animal calls rose up into the air constantly.

The north bank seemed more savage and barbaric, its disciples more fierce than their southern counterparts. Flying creatures could be seen in the air all the time, and it was even possible to occasionally catch sight of the special beasts assigned to protect the mountain peaks themselves. They were shocking to behold.

As Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong escorted Bai Xiaochun to the north bank, the disciples there quickly took notice. Quite a few



even realized that this was the archenemy of the north bank who had risen up in the Chosen battles.

The four peak lords of the north bank emerged to offer greetings to the sect leader, leading him to the grand hall on Ghostfang Peak to discuss certain matters. Bai Xiaochun was left outside the hall. Of course, word of his arrival spread rapidly. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, virtually everyone in both the Outer and Inner sects on the north bank all knew what was happening.

“Did you hear? That villain Bai Xiaochun has come to the north bank!!”

“Bai Xiaochun? He’s the archenemy of the north bank! I can’t believe he dared to come here. Hahaha! This is actually a good thing. A wonderful thing!!”

“I heard the reason he’s being transferred here is that he caused a huge disaster with the snakes in 10,000 Snakes Valley. Supposedly he has some mystical ability to drive everyone crazy no matter where he goes. I’m not sure if it’s true or not, though.”

“Even if he really does have an ability like that, it won’t do any good. He’s on the north bank now. If he thinks he’s a dragon, we’ll show him that he’s nothing but a worm. If he thinks he’s a tiger, we’ll show him that he’s a mere housecat. He inflicted unprecedented humiliation on the north bank in the Chosen battles, but the heavens have eyes! The sect leader must have brought him here so that Bai Xiaochun can finally learn the consequences of provoking the north bank!”

As word spread, all the disciples from the four mountain peaks of the north bank began to cheer in excitement. Clenching their fists tightly, they gazed menacingly toward the summit of Ghostfang Peak.

They were already preparing to make life a living hell for Bai Xiaochun.

That was especially true of the disciples who had actually fought in the Chosen battles. The Gongsun siblings, Xu Song, and others were all extremely excited. They had been in secluded meditation ever since returning, and had all experienced significant progress in their cultivation.

Bai Xiaochun stood outside of the grand hall on Ghostfang Peak, looking up at the beasts flying about in the air. One of them was a seven-colored phoenix, shocking in appearance, which caused all other birds to prostrate in worship when it neared. It soared in a wide circle around the north bank a few times before flying over to Irispetal Peak, where it vanished.

Bai Xiaochun continued to look around curiously. Currently, there were four Ghostfang Peak disciples in the area, all eyeing him coldly.

Their hostility and anger was palpable; clearly, they did not want Bai Xiaochun there.

Bai Xiaochun yawned and rubbed his eyes. Considering how long

the Ghostfang Peak disciples had been staring at him, he finally decided to break the ice. After all, this was going to be his home in the future. Clearing his throat, he said, “Er, if you keep staring at me like that, Sect Nephews, I’m going to get embarrassed.”

The only response to his words on the part of the Ghostfang Peak disciples was that their glares grew even sharper, like flying swords whooshing toward Bai Xiaochun’s heart.

Bai Xiaochun felt a bit awkward, but he knew that he was their senior, so he laughed and said, “Uh... we’re all fellow disciples. Don’t be like that! Come, come, I’ll tell you a funny story. One time—”

Before he could finish speaking, though, their gazes turned even more frightening.

He had already tried his best to start out on the right foot, but all they did was keep glaring at him. He was starting to wonder if he’d done something wrong.

As time passed, and all the disciples on Ghostfang Peak heard that the archenemy of the north bank, Bai Xiaochun, had arrived, more and more people began to fly over in his direction. As they did, hatred seemed to pile upon hatred, and they began to yell angrily.

“Bai Xiaochun, how dare you come to the north bank! We’re gonna show you what happens to people who dare to offend us!”

“Dammit! A single look at him and I can’t help but think of the tragic fate of Elder Brother Beihan Lie!”

“Take him down!”

As the angered shouting grew louder, Bai Xiaochun edged backward nervously. In his mind, they were acting a bit excessively; he was nothing impressive. Even as he backed away, a cold snort suddenly echoed out from within the hall.

“What’s with the racket? Bai Xiaochun, come in.”

The disciples immediately suppressed their anger, but their glares remained as icy as ever. Bai Xiaochun’s hair was standing on end, and yet, he didn’t feel that it was proper to allow himself to be cowed so easily. Glaring fiercely back at the crowd, he put on a proud posture as he strode into the hall.

Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong occupied the seat of honor, with the four peak lords sitting on either side of him. They had strange expressions on their faces, and as for Zheng Yuandong, he was sighing inwardly. He almost couldn’t believe... that Bai Xiaochun had caused such a scene after just having arrived.

“Bai Xiaochun, I’ve discussed matters with the four peak lords of the north bank. We’ve arranged for you to serve as the honor guard of the Beast Conservatory. In addition to caring for the beasts, you can observe them as part of your cultivation of the Waterswamp Kingdom. Hopefully, you can create your life essence spirit quickly.

“The Beast Conservatory is not part of any of the mountain peaks; it’s on the other side of the mountains, with the Ancient Beast Chasm. You must not be naughty and mischievous there! You have to work diligently at cultivation, and treasure this opportunity!” Giving Bai Xiaochun a meaningful look, he turned his attention to the four peak lords.

“My Junior Brother is a bit naughty and mischievous. If he does anything offensive, Fellow Daoists, please punish him as you see fit.”

The four peak lords smiled, and then exchanged some more pleasantries with the sect leader. Finally, Zheng Yuandong departed the north bank and returned to Mount Daoseed. Bai Xiaochun was left behind in the grand hall with the four peak lords.

After studying him for a moment, the old woman from Irispetal Peak spoke in a harsh tone of voice.

“Bai Xiaochun, the north bank is different from the south bank. We have rules here, and if you break them, you’ll be severely punished! If the incident of 10,000 Snakes Valley happened here on the north bank, we’d string you up above the Heavenspan River on the cliffs of Mount Daoseed, for ten years. And that would be considered a light punishment.” With that, she tossed a jade pendant over to him, which contained all the information about the sect rules.

Feeling a bit nervous, Bai Xiaochun merely nodded his head and tried to look as charming as possible.

The four peak lords exchanged glances, then paid Bai Xiaochun no further heed. An Inner Sect disciple from Ghostfang Peak was assigned to escort him to the Beast Conservatory, whereupon everyone dispersed.

The Inner Sect disciple who led him along was a long-faced young man with pockmarked cheeks. He had a very terrifying appearance, and glared coldly at Bai Xiaochun the entire way, not speaking even a single word.

Blinking at the way the young man treated him, Bai Xiaochun followed as they walked through the north bank. Quite a few people stared at him along the way, and none of them seemed friendly. Even some of the Outer Sect disciples looked at him with open hostility.

To them, he was clearly an outsider. Because of that, and because of what the old woman had said in the grand hall, Bai Xiaochun was feeling very apprehensive. He already missed his days on the south bank. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, the long-faced disciple hurried him to a valley behind the mountain peaks of the north bank.

It was a large area covered by a spell formation. Lush vegetation abounded, and the occasional cries of various beasts could be heard. Even more shocking was the chasm in the middle of the jungled area, which emanated terrifying fluctuations that distorted everything around it.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide at the sight of it all. Then he turned to look at a building not too far off in the distance, which was the honor guard station. It had a stone stele erected in front of it, beneath which stood a gaunt Inner Sect disciple, clearly waiting there to meet them.

The long-faced young man hadn't said a single word to Bai Xiaochun the entire time. After approaching the gaunt disciple, he briefly explained what Bai Xiaochun was doing there. The gaunt disciple looked frostily at Bai Xiaochun, then pulled out a jade slip and handed it over to him.

"I'm Sun Wen," he said. "This jade slip has details about all of the nine hundred and eighty-one beasts that live here. Each and every one is a precious treasure of the north bank. If any of them go missing, you will take responsibility." With that, Sun Wen left with the long-faced young man.

Bai Xiaochun coughed dryly at the hostile interaction, but didn't take it to heart. He looked around the honor guard station and found that it didn't even compare to his destroyed immortal's cave back on Fragrant Cloud Peak. However, it was better than the quarters of an Outer Sect disciple, so he couldn't complain.

"That old lady said that the north bank pays a lot of attention to sect rules. Could it be that the rules here are different than the south bank's? Wow. I need to take a good look at them. I definitely don't want to break any on accident."

# Chapter 119: It's Spring, And I Planted My Beastbirth Seed

---

After a moment of silence, he made his decision. “I’ve come to the north bank to study. I have to keep a low profile!”

With that, he poured some spiritual power into the jade slip Sun Wen had given him. Soon afterward, nearly a thousand glowing lights appeared in his mind, each one of which was one of the beasts located in the area.

“So, I’m supposed to take care of these beasts....” Soon, his eyes began to shine. Whether it was because of his knowledge of the five volumes of spirit creatures, or his wondrous battles with the other Chosen from the north bank, he was very interested in the beasts here.

Seeing that the blue sky was beginning to turn into the amber of evening, he hurried outside. The calls of beasts could be heard within the jungle. It was spring, and everything was alive and full of energy. A gentle breeze blew past, carrying the fragrance of flowers. Using the jade slip, Bai Xiaochun began to explore the jungle and look for beasts.

“Highbrow beast!!

“Waterspout dragon?!?! Their organs can be used to as the base of tier-4 spirit medicines!



“Is that... a cloudmist mink? Not only are they incredibly quick, their fur can be turned into defensive magical devices.” The more Bai Xiaochun looked around, the more excited he got. He was finally getting a chance to personally see some of the animals he had only studied in the five volumes of spirit creatures. Seeing pictures and seeing them in real life were completely different experiences. Already, his mastery of the five volumes of spirit creatures was growing.

He saw a six-meter-tall monkey, a huge bear that could blend into its surroundings, a fierce winged tiger, and even a thirty-meter-long pangolin which sped by right in front of him.

The beasts were all wild in nature, and initially treated him with hostility. But when they sensed the aura on his jade slip, they stopped paying him any attention.

Bai Xiaochun looked around excitedly at all of the wild beasts. Soon, he realized that the jade slip made it so that the animals didn't care about him, not even the most vicious of them. That was when he started trying to approach them. However, they reacted with irritation when he got too close.

After a moment of thought, he decided that he wouldn't try to push things too far. When night fell, he returned to the honor guard station.

The following morning at dawn, he got up early. Using the jade slip as his guide, he flew here and there in the jungle, observing the animals. Time passed. Soon, Bai Xiaochun had been on the north bank for half a month.

During that time, he never left the Beast Conservatory, and as such, no matter how much the other disciples wanted to cause problems for him, they were unable to.

That half month was a wonderful time for Bai Xiaochun. Every day, he would excitedly go out to personally observe animals that he had learned of in the five volumes of spirit creatures. He was already coming to realize how certain aspects of his medicine concocting were lacking.

“Before, I focused only on plants and vegetation. I never even thought about the spirit creature ingredients. By adding them in, I can create even more transformations in my medicine. Couple that with the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression, and my concocting will be much better than before.” Currently, he was flying excitedly through the jungle when he caught sight of a flying tiger, laying on the ground panting. One of its legs was wounded and bleeding, apparently having been injured while hunting.

When Bai Xiaochun hurried over, the flying tiger let out a powerful roar. However, Bai Xiaochun managed to push his hand down onto its back, ensuring that it couldn't move even if it wanted to. After all, his fleshly body strength was terrifying, even compared to the flying tiger's.

“Don't move, I'll help you with that wound.” Bai Xiaochun quickly cleaned the wound, and then put some medicinal powder on it. Finally, he released the tiger.

It flew up into the air, and then roared at Bai Xiaochun. A moment later, though, it looked in shock at its previously wounded leg. With a final glance at Bai Xiaochun, it flew off into the distance.

Smiling, Bai Xiaochun watched it fly off.

After finishing his day of observing the beasts, he returned to his residence. Up above, the sky was starting to grow dark. Standing there, he retrieved a wooden box from his bag of holding.

After opening it, he produced a fist-sized seed which pulsed with a strong life force, almost like a heartbeat. It was even possible to see something squirming around inside.

“Beastbirth Seed!” he murmured, eyes shining brightly. He had acquired this item back when the Luo Chen Clan had turned traitor. It had been inside the bag of holding of one of the Luo Chen Clan cultivators. Of course, it was a legendary item within the cultivation world.

In the years that followed, Bai Xiaochun had done some research into the item, and had learned from the five volumes of spirit creatures that if it absorbed the quintessence of one or more beasts, it could naturally give birth to a bloodline descendent of those very beasts.

Back on the south bank, Bai Xiaochun had considered what it would be like to have his own battle beast, but had never been able to meet all the requirements. Now that he was here on the north

bank, however, he did.

“A Beastbirth Seed can give birth to a baby beast. However, an ordinary beast wouldn’t be fitting for me as a Prestige disciple and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. I need to tend to this Beastbirth Seed very carefully. After it blooms, I’ll collect the quintessence of all the most powerful beasts. That way, it will give birth... to a beast that has inherited the strong suits of all beasts! It will be unprecedented since ancient times, and something no one will ever see in the future.... It will be the ultimate battle beast!” Eyes shining with brilliant light, and feeling in higher spirits than ever, he took a deep breath and took the wooden box back to the rear courtyard of the honor guard station.

There, he had set up a small garden to grow spirit plants, which was located within the protective spell formation of the honor guard station. He had even performed a threefold spirit enhancement on the spirit soil, just to be safe.

He carefully buried the Beastbirth Seed in the ground, eyes shining with anticipation.

“According to the information in the five volumes of spirit creatures, it won’t take too long for the Beastbirth Seed to grow....” He stayed in the garden looking at the spot where he’d planted the seed until night fell. When it was dark, he left. Moments later though, he returned. Only after checking that the spell formation’s defenses were all in order did he finally go back inside.

He didn’t rest well that night, and went out frequently to check

on the spot where he'd planted the seed.

Another half month passed before he finally managed to get his excitement and anticipation under control, and devote himself fully to observing the beasts. Other than that, he had his daily cultivation routine, and his study of the sect rules.

Occasionally, other north bank disciples would show up in the Beast Conservatory. They would pay some merit points at the stone stele for an opportunity to observe the beasts, or to attempt to bond them as battle beasts.

However, Bai Xiaochun kept the rear courtyard under tight guard. He had even made some adjustments to the spell formation nodes to ensure that no one could trample the garden.

Time passed. Half a year went by in complete peace and quiet.

During that time, Bai Xiaochun never stepped out of the Beast Conservatory even once. He spent all day in the jungle, with the beasts as his companions. He treated injuries among quite a few of them, and even created some simple medicinal pills for them that got their qi and blood pumping healthily.

Because of Bai Xiaochun's constant care, and his medicinal pills, the beasts soon began to develop a good relationship with him. As they grew more accepting, it became easier to approach them more closely and observe them in more detail. Although he didn't bond any of them, they became very similar to battle beasts, and would listen to every word he spoke.

One day as he was strolling along through the jungle, three north bank disciples approached the stone stele outside the honor guard station. After purchasing three days' worth of time in the Beast Conservatory, they entered the jungle.

One of them was the previous honor guard, Inner Sect disciple Sun Wen, who had handed his duties over to Bai Xiaochun half a year before.

He was flanked by two Outer Sect disciples, one male and one female. The male disciple was short and babyfaced, while the female disciple was young, with a curvaceous body and a beautiful face.

Looking around excitedly, the young woman said, "Thanks, Elder Brother Sun. With you here, I'm much more confident in getting my own battle beast." She looked over at Sun Wen with open admiration.

"Yeah, that's right," said the short male disciple, equally excited. "Elder Brother Sun is an Inner Sect disciple, and served as honor guard in the Beast Conservatory for several years. He's adept at controlling the beasts here. I'm sure they all remember exactly who he is."

"I think you're exaggerating a bit," Sun Wen replied, although he seemed very pleased. "Although it is true that I can command many of the beasts here. If you see one you like, I'll see what I can do. I'm sure I can at least spare you some effort."

“However, you have to remember that there are ten particular battle beasts here with fiery tempers. For example, there’s the skyflame bear, the nightstalker ape, the scarlet flying tiger, and worse of all, the plated mountain juggernaut. Sometimes, people need to be careful even when they come here with protection. Remember not to provoke any of the beasts.” When Sun Wen looked at the female disciple, his heart surged a bit, but inwardly, he sighed.

There was a lot of under-the-table profit to be made in the Beast Conservatory, especially if you were posted there. You could help people find the right beasts using the jade slip, and could even make it easier for them to bond them.

If he’d had his way, he would never have left his post. However, the sect had given him no other choice than to hand it over to Bai Xiaochun, a decision which he resented. Thinking about these things, he led the other two disciples into the jungle, and before long, they had seen quite a few beasts. Many of them came to Sun Wen when he called out to them; clearly, they still remembered him.

“How about this kiwi-deer?

“What about that flying cloudmouse? That’s considered one of the top six hundred beasts here. Want it?

“You two have pretty good luck. This saber-toothed mustang ranks in the top three hundred. When I first saw it, years ago, it

wasn't even close to being this big.

“Eee? It's a dancing flame butterfly! Hahaha! It's in the top three hundred, and can cast hallucination magic. Do you want that one?” As they walked along, the two disciples looked at Sun Wen with admiration bordering on worship. Many of the beasts in the area, upon catching sight of him, would stop what they were doing, as if they were simply waiting to be bonded.

The male disciple excitedly picked the saber-toothed mustang, but the female disciple hesitated a bit before abandoning the dancing flame butterfly. She turned to Sun Wen, clearly hoping to get a better beast.

“Elder Brother Sun, are there any that are in the top two hundred?”

“Don't aim too high,” Sun Wen said in a serious tone. “Battle beasts in the top two hundred are very difficult to tame. Even after serving as the honor guard here for years, I was never able to successfully command them. I bet the new honor guard hasn't even been a third as successful as me. In all of the sect, not a single Qi Condensation disciple could tame such an animal. The two of you should be careful about which beasts you try to control. It can be a very dangerous thing. You—” Before he could finish speaking, the young woman's eyes went wide, and she pointed excitedly toward a nearby boulder.

“Elder Brother Sun, quick, look over there. It's a flying tiger!!” Assuming that since Sun Wen was with her, she didn't have anything to worry about, she began to perform an incantation



gesture without even thinking about it. Instantly, the shamanic powers of the north bank were unleashed, and began to shoot toward the flying tiger.

When Sun Wen turned, he saw a winged tiger lounging on the nearby boulder, looking at the three of them with ruthless coldness.

“Scarlet flying tiger!! Dammit! It usually doesn’t show up here. It’s one of the top ten battle beasts!” His eyes widened, and then he realized that the female disciple was trying to cast shamanic magic on it, and his heart trembled. Grabbing the two Outer Sect disciples, he fell back at top speed. He had only been leading the two Outer Sect disciples into areas where the beasts were relatively docile. The sect wanted the beasts to maintain their wild nature, and because of that, the Beast Conservatory could be a very dangerous place, especially for Outer Sect disciples. Normally, they would only come in when escorted by someone from the Inner Sect.

The flying tiger leapt to its feet and let out a roar as powerful as thunder. When the shamanic power hit it, the power instantly dispersed. However, the tiger’s eyes turned bright red as it shot toward the group of three.

“Not good!!” Shocked, Sun Wen could only watch as the tiger flew up into the air, causing wind to blast out in all directions as power equivalent to the ninth level of Qi Condensation rose up. The two Outer Sect disciples were shocked, and were already shaking in terror. Sun Wen gritted his teeth and pulled out a jade slip to call for help.

However, it was at that moment that a surprised voice could be heard from off in the distance.

“Eee? [Tigger](#), stop being so naughty. Down, boy!”

## Chapter 120: Fight Me, Bai Xiaochun!

---

As soon as his voice echoed out, the aggressive flying tiger shuddered, and then immediately dropped down to the ground, kicking up a significant cloud of dust. There it lay, tail swishing back and forth, its tongue stuck out of its mouth, looking over at an enormous figure approaching from the distance.

It was a gigantic, thirty-meter-long pangolin, with cold green eyes and a brutally murderous aura.

These developments occurred so quickly that Sun Wen simply gaped in shock, and the two Outer Sect disciples behind him gasped.

The female disciple was completely dumbstruck; to have seen the flying tiger suddenly become so docile, only to have the huge pangolin arrive, left her wondering if all of these things were really happening. She simply couldn't imagine how the flying tiger which had caused her Elder Brother Sun to flee at top speed could be ordered down with a single sentence. Its current charming appearance was a complete contrast with the brutal ferocity it had exhibited moments before.

“One of the ten great battle beasts?” murmured the male Outer Sect disciple. Looking at the enormous pangolin, he couldn't help but gasp in shock.

“Plated... mountain... juggernaut....” Sun Wen was also shocked by the sight of the enormous pangolin. Even the mere pressure

which radiated off of it was shocking. However, what struck him with even more shock was the person he saw sitting on the pangolin's back.

“It's you!” he choked.

Perched on the pangolin's back was Bai Xiaochun. As the pangolin neared, he rose to his feet and leaped into the air, landing next to the flying tiger and bopping it on the head.

“Are you going around scaring people again!?” Bai Xiaochun said, sounding cross. The flying tiger blinked, then lowered its head and licked Bai Xiaochun's leg. Sun Wen felt as though his brain were being struck by lightning, and the two Outer Sect disciples behind him were flabbergasted.

“Sorry, guys,” Bai Xiaochun said. “Tigger isn't really that bad. He's just a bit naughty and likes to scare people. Tigger, you apologize this instant!” With that, he gave the flying tiger's paw a soft kick.

Looking a bit annoyed, the flying tiger turned its head toward Sun Wen and let out a roar. Although it didn't roar at the top of its lungs, it still sounded like thunder, and caused Sun Wen and the others to tremble inwardly.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the group of three, and pretended that he didn't recognize Sun Wen, even though he did. Smiling, he said, “Are you guys here to select battle beasts?”

“Yeah, we’re... we’re here to select battle beasts....” the female disciple said, swallowing hard, fear flickering in her eyes as she looked at Bai Xiaochun. The fact that battle beasts which frightened her Elder Brother Sun could become as charming as little puppies was completely terrifying.

“Ah, I see,” Bai Xiaochun replied. “Well maybe we were destined to meet here. I might as well give you a hand.” Clearing his throat, and looking very enthusiastic, he threw his head back and let out a powerful roar.

As the roar echoed out into the jungle, the ground began to tremble. Moments later, an enormous ape crashed into view, coming to a stop directly in front of Bai Xiaochun. Grinning at him, it beat its chest with its fist and howled at the top of its lungs.

“You go stand over there, Apie,” Bai Xiaochun said, waving his hand, “you’re not their type.” The huge ape moped off to the side, face downcast.

Sun Wen was left shaking. He immediately recognized the ape as one of the ten great battle beasts, the fierce nightstalker ape. He had once personally witnessed this very nightstalker ape crush the head of a waterwood lion. It was an explosively violent creature.

And yet, in front of Bai Xiaochun, it was docile and charming, something that Sun Wen would never have dreamed could be possible.

A moment later, a huge bear tromped up, stood on its hind legs in

front of Bai Xiaochun and then started dancing back and forth.

“Teddy, we have guests!” Bai Xiaochun said, starting to get a bit frustrated. “Settle down!” The bear looked over at Sun Wen and the others, and let out a powerful roar.

“Sky... skyflame bear. I can’t believe it’s dancing....” Sun Wen’s vision was swimming, and his mind reeled from the massive waves of shock that battered it. As for the two Outer Sect disciples, however shaken they were before, they were now ten times more so, and were filled with unprecedented terror.

Then, the ground started to shake even harder as one beast after another appeared. A huge horde of hundreds of beasts assembled, none of them the docile type that Sun Wen had found before. These beasts were all fierce and terrifying.

Sun Wen and the Outer Sect disciples instantly went weak at the knees. As for the Outer Sect disciples, their faces were ashen as sensations of imminent crisis filled them from head to toe.

“Very well,” Bai Xiaochun said, trying to sound profound. “Take your pick.” He coughed lightly.

Sun Wen was at a complete loss. He simply couldn’t imagine what Bai Xiaochun might have done to make all of these beasts follow his orders, and in a mere half a year at that.

The fact that Sun Wen had been stationed here for years left him

feeling bitter inside. The sharp contrast between himself and Bai Xiaochun was bad enough for him, there was no need to even mention the deep regret felt by the male Outer Sect disciple.

He admired all of the beasts present, and was filled with bitterness that he had carelessly selected one already. If he had merely waited a bit longer, he might have met this miraculous Elder Brother, and stumbled into incredible good fortune. But now... he had no such chance.

The female disciple was trembling in disbelief. She quickly pointed at a huge black condor, which let out a piercing cry. Normally, it was fierce to the extreme, but around Bai Xiaochun, that changed. It allowed the young woman's shamanic magic to pour into it, slowly bonding it to her. After that, it took to flight, soaring above them through the air.

Bai Xiaochun laughed, and then waved his hand. Instantly, the rest of the beasts dispersed, and he jumped back up onto the pangolin's back. The pangolin let out a roar and turned to carry Bai Xiaochun off into the distance.

Almost unwilling to believe that she had succeeded, the young woman called out, "Elder Brother, what's your name?"

Bai Xiaochun immediately felt quite proud of himself. Sticking his chin up, he naturally assumed the melancholy posture of a lonely hero. Swishing his sleeve, he said, "Call me... Bai Xiaochun."

Clasping his hands behind his back, he stood there atop the pangolin, hair swaying in the wind, looking a bit depressed. After all of his years of practice, he had become very good at assuming this look.

The image she was seeing was instantly branded deep into the female disciple's mind.

“Bai Xiaochun? Why does that name sound so familiar...?” The male disciple's jaw dropped, and his eyes went wide with incredulity. “The archenemy of the north bank!!”

The female disciple gasped, suddenly remembering why Bai Xiaochun's name was so familiar. However, it seemed completely impossible to correlate the archenemy of the north bank with this lonely, melancholy figure in front of her.

Finally, Sun Wen led them out of the Beast Conservatory.

Back in the jungle, Bai Xiaochun sat down on the pangolin's back. With no one there to look at him, he sloughed off the lonely hero look and began to proudly hum a little tune. At the same time, he tossed out medicinal pills to the nearby creatures.

In addition to how he dutifully cared for them, one of the reasons the beasts had become so docile around him during the past half year was his medicinal pills.

Because of the pills, the beasts felt stronger and more energetic



than ever, causing them to like him and grow closer to him on a daily basis.

Of course, not all of the beasts had the same reaction. There were some that were extremely cautious. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't care. All in all, his half year in the Beast Conservatory had been one of complete happiness.

Recently, his Beastbirth Seed had even sprouted, filling him with intense excitement.

Good things just kept happening one after another. He had also come to find that his Waterswamp Kingdom was progressing, and although his life essence spirit hadn't appeared yet, the technique itself was growing more ferocious.

The way things were going, Bai Xiaochun had the feeling that his cultivation of the Waterswamp Kingdom would definitely lead to the appearance of a life essence spirit. The main thing he was curious about was what type of beast it would be.

He couldn't stop thinking about what it would be like to have a complete Waterswamp Kingdom, a top secret magic that was of the same caliber as Ghostfang's Ghosts Haunt the Night. He also wondered what his battle prowess would be.

Filled with anticipation, he focused on cultivation for another month. By this time, he had been on the north bank for the better part of a year. Although he never left the Beast Conservatory and kept a low profile, stories about him taming the beasts began to

spread among the disciples outside.

That news, as well as stories about Bai Xiaochun's past deeds, became one of the most common conversation topics among the north bank disciples. The scene that had played out during the Chosen battles caused countless disciples to gnash their teeth. The thought of what had occurred with Beihan Lie left them feeling as if they were being stabbed in the heart. Then they would look at their own battle beasts, and the pain would become indelible shadows across their hearts.

One day, Beihan Lie finally emerged from secluded meditation. There he stood in his immortal's cave, his eyes wide as he looked at a jade slip which had arrived half a year ago, informing him that Bai Xiaochun had come to the north bank. Baring his teeth, he crushed the jade slip.

"Bai Xiaochun, the humiliation you heaped upon me will be cleansed today! You might be strong, but I've made a lot of progress in the years since then. Unheard-of progress!! I've finally pushed my Sunset Incantation to the third level! I'm invincible under Foundation Establishment!" His cultivation base erupted, and it was at the great circle of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. After the intense provocation from years ago, he had gone mad with his cultivation, until he was in a state of frenzied hysteria.

"Bai Xiaochun!!" Beihan Lie threw his head back and roared, bursting out from his immortal's cave. Many people noticed what was happening, especially the Gongsun siblings and Xu Song.

"So powerful!! He actually pushed the Sunset Incantation all the

way to the third level! Nobody's done that for the past thousand years! He's grown, but then again, so have we. It's hard to say how much more powerful he is compared to back then!"

"Anybody who experienced such a tragedy would surely relive it every day and go mad, just like he did."

Even as the Chosen observed Beihan Lie with trembling hearts, he transformed into a beam of light that shot toward one of the most popular locations on the north bank, the centrally located trial platform.

The trial platform was actually a clawed stone hand attached to the statue of an enormous, ferocious beast. The statue itself was thirty meters tall, vicious to the extreme, and even seemed to emanate the air of battle. It looked something like an upright crocodile, covered with scales, with three rows of sharp spikes running down its back. Even more shocking was that the clawed hand made up more than half of its entire body.

Its left hand was somewhat eroded from the wind and rain, but its right hand stretched up as if to rip apart the heavens!

The trial platform was the palm of that right hand!

The statue had been discovered four thousand years ago in the Spirit Stream Sect's Ancient Beast Chasm. It had taken quite a bit of work to extract it and set it up in its current location, where it became the north bank's popular trial platform.

Currently, Beihan Lie stood on the trial platform, eyes shining with the desire to fight. Throwing his head back, he howled, “I’m putting up all of the merit points I have. 37,000! I hereby challenge Bai Xiaochun!” As the words left his mouth, the trial platform began to tremble, and the air distorted as a paper crane materialized! Without the slightest delay, it shot at top speed in the direction of the Beast Conservatory!

The north bank trial platform was a very famous place in the Spirit Stream Sect. Even the disciples in the south bank had heard of it. According to the rules of the trial platform, anyone could pay some merit points to issue a challenge to anyone else on the north bank. Once they did so, a paper crane would appear, which would fly to notify the other party of the challenge.

The challenge would remain in effect for half a year. If the challenged party accepted, the fight would begin immediately. If the challenged party won the fight, they got to keep the merit points. If they lost, there was no merit point penalty.

It was also possible to refuse the challenge. If that happened, then half a year later, the challenge would be nullified, and the merit points would be returned to the challenger. However, during that half year time period, the challenger could not retract the challenge.

Because of those rules, the challengers ended up being in a very passive position. However, that made things fair.

## Chapter 121: Paper Cranes Fill The Sky....

---

The news that Beihan Lie had made such incredible progress with his divine ability and then issued a challenge to Bai Xiaochun on the trial platform swept rapidly through the north bank. Disciples flocked to the trial platform, where they waited eagerly to see the outcome.

Beihan Lie stood there, his blood boiling with the desire for revenge. He wanted to cleanse the humiliation which he had felt, and prove to all on the north bank that Beihan Lie was the same Chosen he was before!

“However far I fall down, that’s how far I’ll climb up, and even higher! Bai Xiaochun, you’re nothing but a stepping stone to me!” Beihan Lie’s eyes burned with madness. He had been waiting for this day for a long, long time, and was completely confident that his Sunset Incantation would secure him victory against Bai Xiaochun!

Of course, he had heard the stories about Bai Xiaochun’s final match with Ghostfang. However, he was still confident that his mad struggles over the past years put him in a position to fight first Bai Xiaochun, and then Ghostfang.

“Bai Xiaochun, get out here!” Beihan Lie roared, shaking inside and out, thrumming with energy that caused intense shock among the spectators. His unleashed cultivation base was like a vortex, spinning around him in all directions.

“Good job, Elder Brother Beihan! Take Bai Xiaochun down!”

“Hahaha! We’ve been waiting for a long time for this day to arrive!”

As crowd was cheering, Bai Xiaochun was in the jungle, sitting on top of the pangolin, humming a little tune as they went on a little walk. Suddenly, a beam of light appeared off in the distance. It sent a blood-colored glow out in all directions, and radiated a murderous aura that seemed permeated with the desire to do battle. Bai Xiaochun looked up as the blood-colored light appeared in front of him, taking the shape of a paper crane.

An emotionless voice spoke from the crane to echo out in the jungle. “Inner Sect disciple Bai Xiaochun: Beihan Lie of the north bank, in the ninth level of Qi Condensation, has put up 37,000 merit points to challenge you to a fight. The challenge remains open for the following half year. If you win, you may keep the merit points. If you lose, then according to the rules of the trial platform, you will not be penalized.”

The voice itself seemed to contain something that caused one’s blood to boil and one’s impulses to surge.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide, and his heart began to beat rapidly. Something about the voice seemed to be intentionally driving him toward madness.

Fight! Fight! FIGHT!

“Fight, my ass!” Bai Xiaochun said, smacking his chest to dispel the effects of the voice. After all of his time spent researching the sect rules of the north bank, he was not unfamiliar with the trial platform, and knew the rules well.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, am a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. By no means will I participate in any fighting and killing.” Glancing once more at the paper crane, he coughed dryly and then waved his sleeve.... A wind sprang up, sending the paper crane flying off to the side.

Humming a little tune, he sent the pangolin onward through the jungle as though nothing had ever happened.

Time passed. About an hour later, the crowd around the trial platform was completely shocked, and the cheering had died down quite a bit.

After two hours, people were starting to whisper back and forth to each other. Beihan Lie still stood there on the trial platform, trembling and twitching.

“Bai Xiaochun isn’t going to avoid the fight, is he? No way.... He took first place in the Chosen battles. He, he... he couldn’t possibly not care about his reputation, could he?”

“I doubt that’s possible. It doesn’t matter who the Chosen is, when they get challenged, they either fight right then and there, or schedule another time to fight. Why hasn’t Bai Xiaochun even responded?”

Four hours later, the sun was setting. However, Bai Xiaochun still hadn't responded. The north bank disciples were stunned.

“Dammit! I should have known! I can't believe the shameless Bai Xiaochun is avoiding the fight!!”

“This is preposterous! He came here as a representative of the south bank. What a loss of face for them!!”

As the discussions raged, Beihan Lie glared off in the direction of the Beast Conservatory. He could never have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would actually avoid the fight. He couldn't accept it. Bai Xiaochun had taken first place in the Chosen battles; if Beihan Lie had taken first place, and then someone challenged him, he wouldn't avoid the fight.

“He's definitely going to come out and fight!” Beihan Lie said through gritted teeth. The way he stood there, completely focused, caused the observing north bank disciples to be shaken inwardly.

A few moments later, another beam of light appeared from within the crowd as someone flew up onto the trial platform. As people looked over, the newcomer was immediately identified. He was also a Chosen like Beihan Lie. Xu Song!

A grave expression could be seen on his face as he stood there on the trial platform. When he thought back to the fight he had witnessed between Bai Xiaochun and Ghostfang, he knew that Ghostfang hadn't been truly defeated. He had handed Bai



Xiaochun the victory by tiring himself out. Bai Xiaochun was strong, Xu Song had to admit that. However, in the past years, he had grown significantly, and was far, far stronger than he had been during the Chosen battles. After much consideration, he had come to believe that he definitely qualified to fight with Bai Xiaochun.

“Today, I, Xu Song, will join Beihan Lie to challenge Bai Xiaochun to a fight!” he said loudly. “Xu Song of the north bank! I’m putting up 20,000 merit points to issue the challenge!” After a moment of protracted silence, a deafening cheer rose up from the crowd.

“Elder Brother Xu Song is actually challenging Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Good job, Elder Brother Xu Song!”

Glittering light rose up as a second paper crane formed and then shot toward the Beast Conservatory.

Beihan Lie trembled as he looked over at Xu Song. Their gazes met, and both could see how much the other was determined to fight Bai Xiaochun. After a moment, they both began to laugh at the tops of their lungs.

At about this time, another beam of light shot out toward the trial platform. It was a young woman, none other than Gongsun Wan’er.

“I, Gongsun Wan’er, put up 20,000 merit points to issue a challenge to Bai Xiaochun!”

Before the crowd could cheer any louder, a fourth beam of light shot toward the trial platform.

“I, Gongsun Yun, put up 20,000 merit points to issue a challenge to Bai Xiaochun!”

The Gongsun siblings had experienced significant progress in recent years, and were also challenging Bai Xiaochun to a fight.

As their voices echoed out, light glittered, and two paper cranes formed and then shot out through the air toward the Beast Conservatory.

“Look how fired up they are! Now that’s what north bank Chosen are like!!”

“Those Chosen are invincible!!”

“Hahaha! Bai Xiaochun must be scared out of his pants. You know what, even if I lose, it’s only a few merit points. I’m gonna challenge him too! He needs to know that the north bank sticks together!”

A fifth, a sixth, and even a seventh disciple emerged from the crowd to fly over and stand on the trial platform.

“I, Chen Ao, will share trials and tribulations with Elder Brother Gongsun Yun. I put up 700 merit points to challenge Bai Xiaochun!”

“Elder Brother Xu Song has always treated me well. I, Sun Chenglong, will stand by his side! I put up 500 merit points to challenge Bai Xiaochun to a fight!”

“I, Zhou Fang, put up 400 merit points to challenge Bai Xiaochun to a fight!”

The north bank was being completely shaken. Meanwhile, back in the Beast Conservatory, Bai Xiaochun watched in shock as one paper crane after another flew toward him. As they did, they spoke with the same emotionless voice.

“So many....” Bai Xiaochun thought, blinking. He had already tossed three paper cranes off to the side, only to see five or six more flying toward him, one after another.

All of them exerted influence on him to try to get him to fight, making it hard to stay calm. Suddenly, wings sprouted from his back as he shot through the forest at top speed back toward the honor guard station.

Along the way, another dozen or so paper cranes reached him, all of them speaking the same type of words.

The stimulating sensation caused by the words made Bai Xiaochun let out an enraged roar.

“You people are such bullies! How can you challenge me with so many people, and each one in the eighth level of Qi Condensation or higher. What are you trying to accomplish? No! I want to keep a low profile!” After arriving back at the honor guard station, he activated the spell formation, trapping the paper cranes outside. Finally, he sat down cross-legged, looking very lofty.

“I’m definitely going to keep a low profile here on the north bank. There’s no way I’m going to give in to your demands. Humph!” Sighing emotionally, he put the matter aside and began to meditate.

As the night passed, more and more people leaped up to join Beihan Lie on the trial platform and issued challenges to Bai Xiaochun. The whole sect was set astir. Many of them were there to ingratiate themselves to the Chosen, and of course, a large number of them were fans of Gongsun Wan’er. It was quite an exhilarating scene to see so many people putting up so many merit points.

Around daybreak, Bai Xiaochun finished his cultivation session and pushed the door open to find a cacophony of voices shaking everything in the area. He stared in shock, and worked hard just to suppress the desire to fight which rose up in his heart at the instigation of the voices. Astonishingly, there were over a hundred paper cranes waiting outside for him.

“You north bank people are crazy,” he said. Scalp tingling, he

closed the door and didn't take even a single step outside.

The following morning, he assumed that the north bank people would have finally called it quits. However, upon opening the door, a sound like thunder could be heard coming from the more than 300 paper cranes piled up like a mountain outside of the honor guard station.

Each and every one of those paper cranes represented a challenge to fight....

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and quickly closed the door, more convinced than ever that the north bank people were lunatics.

“Ai. Sometimes it's a real mistake to be so superior to everyone. Bai Xiaochun. Ah, Bai Xiaochun. If you made a mistake anywhere, it was in being so superior.” Face downcast, he sat down in the honor guard station, where he thought for some time before deciding to simply work on cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom.

Time passed. During the following week, every time Bai Xiaochun pushed open his door, he would find that hundreds more cranes had arrived. Eventually, he simply got used to it, until around two thousand of them were piled up outside.

Whenever disciples came to visit the Beast Conservatory, the first thing they noticed upon entering was the huge pile of paper cranes....

The entire north bank had sprung into motion because of Beihan Lie issuing a fight challenge. The Chosen were whipped up into a storm, and it only continued to grow more intense. Eventually, roughly forty percent of the Inner Sect disciples had issued a challenge to Bai Xiaochun. Most of them offered up a small portion of their merit points, not all of them like Beihan Lie had. Eventually, word spread to the elders and the peak lords, and even they were shocked by what was happening.

During the four thousand year history of the north bank trial platform, this was the first time... that anything like this had ever happened.

Nearly two thousand Inner Sect disciples had issued challenges, and all to a single person....

It was impossible to control the situation, which was like a flowing tide that dragged all the north bank into madness.

“Did you hear the latest news? Today, three hundred Inner Sect disciples challenged Bai Xiaochun at the trial platform!”

“Hahaha! Bai Xiaochun is definitely scared to death. By now he definitely realizes how strong the north bank is, and how much we stick together!”

“Hold on. I’m gonna go challenge him too! Right now!”

# Chapter 122: I Accept This Challenge!

---

The north bank disciples viewed challenging Bai Xiaochun as a sort of heroic accomplishment. It was causing such a stir that word even spread to the south bank. The disciples there exchanged glances of sympathy. Of course, that sympathy was not for Bai Xiaochun; it was for the disciples of the north bank.

“They really don’t know him at all....”

“Just wait. It won’t be long before they realize how terrifying Bai Xiaochun is.”

Time passed. On the tenth day, the number of Inner Sect disciples who had challenged Bai Xiaochun had reached about 2,300 in total. That number increased every day.

It reached the point that any Inner Sect disciple who didn’t go to challenge Bai Xiaochun was considered to have lost face. Not going to the trial platform to send out a paper crane was considered to be contemptible.

Once that became the norm... even more people challenged him.

“Hahaha! On this day, I, Xu Dabao, put up 10 merit points to challenge Bai Xiaochun!”

“Humph! I, Zhou Yuncong, challenged the archenemy of the north bank three days ago. Too bad that numskull didn’t dare to

fight!”

On the thirteenth day, the number of disciples who had challenged Bai Xiaochun passed the 3,000 mark. The north bank was completely and utterly in a frenzy. No matter where you went, the only thing people talked about were the challenges to Bai Xiaochun.

For such a massive storm to have been caused by a single person was unheard-of. New challenges flew out every day, and tens of thousands of Outer Sect disciples were gathered around the trial platform, there to watch the proud Inner Sect disciples in their glory. Every paper crane that flew off was accompanied by cheers, regardless of how many merit points had been put up as the stakes.

Beihan Lie had never imagined that his actions would give birth to such pandemonium. He was now far more famous than before, especially considering that he had come back from an injury to his current height.

On the seventeenth day, the number of disciples who had challenged Bai Xiaochun broke past 4,000. The storm which had overtaken the north bank was filling the entire sect.

By this point, what was happening was no longer a simple challenge to fight. It was a symbol. The number of merit points offered up didn't matter. Some people offered less than ten. However, the event was so exciting that everybody had to participate.



“Bai Xiaochun is scared! He doesn’t dare to fight with the north bank!”

“Hahaha! Even if he were stronger than he is, he would still have to kneel before the combined might of the north bank!”

“The spirit of the north bank can never be surpassed!!”

The four peak lords of the north bank were tongue-tied, and Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong looked on with wide eyes. Even the prime elders took notice. After all, this sort of thing had never occurred before.

The north bank disciples were so excited about the matter that virtually every day after the challenges were issued, people would rush over to the Beast Conservatory to look at the paper cranes flying to join the pile. Loud cheering would always accompany the scene.

By the twentieth day, eighty to ninety percent of the Inner Sect disciples had issued challenges to fight. It was only then that the pandemonium began to die down. That morning, a burly Outer Sect disciple appeared near the trial platform, seemingly bursting with eagerness. In his mind, considering the fact that over four thousand people had already challenged Bai Xiaochun ahead of him, even if Bai Xiaochun did choose to fight someone, he surely wouldn’t pick people who had offered low amounts of merit points. After all, Bai Xiaochun had taken first place in the Chosen battles.

To be able to challenge someone like that, even if he was avoiding the fighting, left the burly disciple bursting with joy. Later on, he could brag that he had challenged Bai Xiaochun, but that Bai Xiaochun had run from the fight.

More excited than ever, the burly disciple unleashed the power of the fourth level of Qi Condensation and leaped up onto the trial platform, the first person of the day to issue a challenge, and also the first Outer Sect to ever do so. After landing on the trial, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“I, Liu Dabiao, put up 200 merit points to challenge the archenemy of the north bank, Bai Xiaochun!” Laughing at the top of his lungs, Liu Dabiao clasped his hands behind his back and stared off in the direction of the Beast Conservatory. “Bai Xiaochun, once you receive Lord Tiger’s challenge, will you, an Inner Sect disciple, dare to fight me?”

The character ‘biao’ in Liu Dabiao’s name means ‘tiger’

This man’s actions stunned everyone present. The first reaction was that this Liu Dabiao was clearly a fool. No matter how detestable Bai Xiaochun was, he had taken first place in the Chosen battles. He was not the type of person that could be challenged by an Outer Sect disciple. But then people realized that Liu Dabiao was obviously using this chance to try to earn a name for himself, and their eyes began to shine brightly.

For an Outer Sect disciple to challenge an Inner Sect disciple, who then fled from the match, was an amazing situation that got everyone’s blood burning.

Liu Dabiao had clearly issued his challenge to fight because he wished to join the grand occasion of opposing the archenemy of the north bank.

Even as Liu Dabiao stood there proudly on the trial platform, Bai Xiaochun was just getting up from a session of meditation in the honor guard station of the Beast Conservatory. Sighing, he pushed open the door.

Over the past twenty days, he had gotten a headache every time he opened the door. However, he had no other choice. If too many paper cranes built up, the desire to fight would grow too strong, and he wouldn't be able to handle it. Therefore, the first thing he did every morning was open the door.

Every time he did so, he would see hundreds of paper cranes, and hear countless voices issuing challenges. Yesterday, he had even taken the time to count them all, and found that there were over four thousand. By now, they were piled up everywhere.

This time when he opened the door, he was surprised to find only a few dozen new paper cranes. But then, only a moment later, a huge cloud of over a thousand cranes, bursting with a desire to do battle that could topple mountains and drain seas, flew toward him from off in the distance. Bai Xiaochun's mind and heart were instantly engulfed by a powerful urge to fight.

As the more than one thousand paper cranes descended, overwhelming him with the desire to do battle, he was literally buried by the cranes.

A moment later, his head popped into view, and he crawled out from within the pile of cranes. A shocked expression could be seen on his face as he looked around. He was so surprised that he could barely move.

He reached out and grabbed the first crane he saw, to hear an emotionless voice speaking in his ear.

“Inner Sect disciple Bai Xiaochun: Outer Sect disciple Liu Dabiao of the north bank, fourth level of Qi Condensation, has put up 200 merit points to challenge you to a fight.”

Bai Xiaochun stared at the paper crane, shocked. When he heard that the challenger was in the fourth level of Qi Condensation, his eyes flashed with anger.

“What a bunch of bullies, these north bank people. I’ve been trying hard to keep a low profile, but it’s simply impossible. Sheesh! If Beihan Lie doesn’t want to admit he lost, and feels like emerging after ten years in secluded meditation, well that’s understandable. The Inner Sect disciples want to challenge me? I can endure. But now Outer Sect disciples are challenging me? Enough! Enough! I can accept a challenge! Liu Dabiao? Fourth level of Qi Condensation? He’s the one!” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and sighed inwardly. It was too bad that the beasts in the Beast Conservatory couldn’t be taken out easily unless they were bonded. Plus, he didn’t know the Heavenspan Shamanic Control Incantation. Otherwise, he would take the hundreds of beasts here out with him and crush the fighting arena!

Filled with regret, he stuck his chin up and looked at the paper crane.

“I accept this challenge!”

Meanwhile, back on the trial platform, Liu Dabiao stood there with his hands clasped behind his back, basking in the feeling of being the center of attention. It was almost overwhelming on an emotional level.

“Bai Xiaochun, Lord Tiger will wait for you for ten breaths of time. You noob! You numskull! Do you dare to accept Lord Tiger’s challenge, or not?! Bai Xiaochun, get the hell out here right now!”

As he got more and more excited, his voice continued to get louder and louder, causing the crowd to cheer even more.

Liu Dabiao’s was getting really worked up, and had never even stopped to consider that Bai Xiaochun might actually accept his challenge. From his perspective, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had been avoiding the fights for the past twenty days meant that even if he did start to accept some, he would definitely pick the Inner Sect disciples. He would never be so shameless as to fight with someone from the Outer Sect. After all... he had taken first place in the Chosen battles!

Liu Dabiao was feeling more proud of himself than ever, and was congratulating himself on picking the perfect situation to make a name for himself. He could even imagine what it would be like in a few days. Everyone in the Outer Sect would know who he was, and

his newfound fame might even cause some of the Junior Sisters he liked to take an interest in him.

“Bai Xiaochun, you have three breaths of time left!” he roared. “Hurry up! Do you dare to fight with Lord Tiger!?” Laughing with extreme contentment, he prepared to remove himself from the platform.

But then....

Suddenly, a screen of light rose up in front of him, making it impossible for him to leave. The surrounding disciples stared in shock.

Next, a completely emotionless voice rang out to fill the trial platform.

“Inner Sect disciple Bai Xiaochun has accepted the challenge issued by Outer Sect disciple Liu Dabiao. Let the fighting begin!”

The glittering light of teleportation could be seen as Bai Xiaochun slowly materialized on the trial platform, thanks to the powers of the paper crane. There he was in front of tens of thousands of north bank disciples, all of whom stared in complete shock.

A deathly silence filled the air. Among the crowd of tens of thousands were both Outer Sect disciples and Inner Sect disciples, and yet all of them were struck as mute as wooden chickens as they stared at Bai Xiaochun.

None of them could ever have possibly imagined that Bai Xiaochun... would actually accept a challenge. Although it was within the realm of possibility, it was still completely unbelievable that... he would accept a challenge from an Outer Sect disciple in the fourth level of Qi Condensation....

Such shamelessness defied the imaginations of everyone present, and left their minds completely blank.

“You’re Liu Dabiao?” Bai Xiaochun asked, clasping his hands behind his back and looking very serious.

Liu Dabiao’s knees began to wobble, and tears started rolling down his cheeks. He looked like he was on the verge of fainting. His eyes were blank, and for a moment, he wondered if he were dreaming. He had simply wanted to take advantage of the situation to make a name for himself. How could he ever have guessed that Bai Xiaochun would actually accept his challenge!?!?

“I... I....” He was shaking so hard that he could hardly speak straight.

Before he could even say anything, Bai Xiaochun said, “Why don’t you concede? When I attack, I frighten even myself.”

The words hit Liu Dabiao’s ears like crashing thunder. Visualizing all of the stories he had heard about Bai Xiaochun, especially the tragedy of Beihan Lie, his knees went stiff. Terrified, he almost began to weep.

“I concede!!”

As the words left his mouth, he vanished, and Bai Xiaochun stood there proudly on the trial platform, watching as 200 merit points were added to his command medallion.

“Life can be so lonely...” he said, flicking his sleeve and sighing. The spectators began to howl in rage, so loudly that it echoed out from the north bank to be heard by the disciples on the south bank.



# Chapter 123: Fight!

---

“Completely shameless!! I can’t believe the world has someone as shameless as him in it!!”

“Heavens! In all my years, I’ve never seen a guy as shameless as that. I can’t deal with this. Can’t deal with it, I tell you! I’m gonna go strangle him to death!”

“Get out of my way! This villain Bai Xiaochun’s shameless is incomprehensible!!”

Everyone was going mad and shouting at the tops of their lungs. Eyes were shot with blood. Liu Dabiao reappeared after having conceded, his legs wobbling and tears streaming down his face. Everyone present felt sorry for him.

“This is too much! Instead of accepting the challenge of an Inner Sect disciple, he fights an Outer Sect disciple? If he wants to pick someone weak to fight, fine, but did he have to pick someone that weak?!?!”

“Hey, fight me, Chen Ao! I challenged you on the first day. Come on, I dare ya!!” The Inner Sect disciples were going mad, unleashing anger upon Bai Xiaochun that could shake heaven and earth.

The Gongsun siblings and Xu Song were speeding toward the trial platform from off in the distance. After learning what had happened, they were shaken, but also enraged.

That was especially true of Beihan Lie, who threw his head back and roared.

“Bai Xiaochun, I challenge you to fight!!”

His words caused everything to shake as if with thunder, and filled all four peaks of the north bank. Countless disciples of both the Outer and Inner sects were shocked. Eyes wide, they began to race toward the trial platform.

So many people were calling out that they wanted to fight that several hundred paper cranes formed and shot toward Bai Xiaochun, almost inundating him.

This was a scene which had never, ever played out before on the north bank. The disciples were going crazy, and even the four peak lords were left gasping. A huge group of elders appeared, hovering up in the air and looking down at the scene playing out.

However, no matter which way they analyzed the situation, they couldn't think of any way in which Bai Xiaochun had violated any sect rules. The old woman from Irispetal Peak looked down at him with wide eyes, aware that everything he had done was in compliance with all regulations....

Seeing all the paper cranes, and seeing how angry everyone was, Bai Xiaochun started getting mad. He hadn't done anything to deserve this, and was convinced that he was in the right. He hadn't violated a single sect rule. He hadn't challenged a single person;

they kept challenging him!

All he had done was accept the challenge....

Hearing how everyone was shouting out challenges at him, his eyes widened into a glare, and he roared, “You bunch of bullies! Fine. Fine! You forced me into this!”

Sweeping his furious gaze across the crowd, he waved his hand, and a sound like rushing water could be heard as more than 5,000 paper cranes emerged from his bag of holding. Those were all of the paper cranes he had collected recently, a thousand of which had just come in that morning....

The crowd instantly went quiet. The Inner Sect disciples were all cracking their knuckles, ready to fight at any moment. As for the Outer Sect disciples, they were burning with rage. However, some of them, the impulsive thousand or so who had joined Liu Dabiao to issue challenges, were also a bit nervous.

Bai Xiaochun, heart pulsing with fury, looked over at the paper cranes and then selected one from an Outer Sect disciple in the fifth level of Qi Condensation.

“You!” he said loftily. “I accept your challenge!”

As his voice echoed out, one of the Outer Sect disciples in the crowd, a teenager, vanished as he was teleported onto the trial platform. Trembling, tears welling up in his eyes and leaking out

the corners, he edged backward.

“I... I concede!!”

The audience gaped, and some people’s vision started to turn black as they realized they had underestimated the true depth of Bai Xiaochun’s shamelessness....

“ARRGHHHH! I’m gonna kill him! Bai Xiaochun, you’re not gonna escape this time! Not unless you fight everybody here! Until that happens, this matter will never be over!”

“This level of shamelessness... I... I don’t even know what to say!”

“Heavens! I hope some immortal lightning falls from the sky and strikes him dead!”

That only got Bai Xiaochun more angry. Looking around at the maddened crowd, he said, “I, Bai Xiaochun, came here from the south bank, alone and impoverished. I’ve kept my tail between my legs up to now because I didn’t want to offend anyone. But since you’ve forced me, then fine, I’m gonna go all out!”

Eyes bright red, he clenched his jaw and pulled out a paper crane from a disciple in the fifth level of Qi Condensation.

A moment later, the Outer Sect disciple appeared in front of Bai Xiaochun, so terrified he was on the verge of collapsing. He

immediately shouted that he conceded. Bai Xiaochun let out a cold harrumph and then produced another paper crane.

To the increasing rage of the crowd, Bai Xiaochun produced one challenge crane after another belonging to Outer Sect disciples. Each and every one was so terrified their legs felt like jelly. However, challenges could not be canceled by the challenger, so they had no choice but to tearfully concede and watch as their merit points were transferred to Bai Xiaochun.

After conceding, they would return to the crowd, their fury even stronger than before, and yet also feeling pained because of the loss of merit points.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun's merit points were increasing rapidly, to the point where even he was shocked. That day was a huge catastrophe for all of the impulsive Outer Sect disciples....

To them, Bai Xiaochun had become a pernicious devil who consumed merit points with extreme prejudice. As for Bai Xiaochun, he ruthlessly swept through the entire group of Outer Sect disciples, the process of which took three days.

He didn't fight a single time, although taking out all the paper cranes left his arm a bit sore.

The north bank disciples were apoplectic, their voices hoarse and sore from all the shouting. And yet, they didn't calm down in the least bit. Eventually, the Hall of Justice had to intervene to keep things under control. But even they could only watch Bai Xiaochun

at work, remaining vigilant against a possible uprising on the part of the north bank disciples.

The four peak lords looked on in absolute astonishment. Glancing at each other, they could see the helplessness and shock in each other's eyes.

“No wonder the south bank sent Bai Xiaochun over here!”

“This guy could run the sect into the ground!!”

“And yet, he hasn't broken any sect rules....”

Three days later, Bai Xiaochun stretched his right arm to loosen it up, then let out a cold harrumph. Having cleared all of the Outer Sect disciples' fight challenges, he looked around at the tens of thousand of people surrounding him, and could tell that they wouldn't let him leave.

After a moment of silence, he chuckled. “Well, since you're going to be like that, don't blame me for what happens next.”

It was at that moment that his normal cautiousness faded, and the same veins of steel appeared that had been present in the fight with the Luo Chen Clan!

Even as the crowd looked on with bloodshot eyes, he selected a fight challenge from an Inner Sect disciple.

All eyes were completely focused on the trial platform as a figure materialized. It was a gaunt young man who, the moment he appeared, threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“Bai Xiaochun, today I will—”

BOOM!

Before he could even finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun was right in front of him, unleashing a fist strike. The gaunt young man’s eyes went wide as he sailed through the air and then slammed into the shield surrounding the trial platform, where he slumped down, unconscious.

The audience gasped, and their eyes went wide. Bai Xiaochun stood there with a placid expression on his face as he pulled out a second paper crane from an Inner Sect disciple. Moments later, the second Inner Sect disciple appeared on the platform. In the blink of an eye, a fist flashed, and he was unconscious. Then, Bai Xiaochun pulled out a third challenge....

It took one day for him to accept the challenge cranes from a hundred Inner Sect disciples. All of them were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and yet none of them could stand up to a single punch from Bai Xiaochun.

When evening fell, Bai Xiaochun chose to rest. He sat down cross-legged on the trial platform, surrounded by a furious crowd bent on preventing him from leaving if he tried.

The next day at dawn, Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes. Expression the same as ever, he selected a paper crane, and then once again set to work. Yet again, a hundred people couldn't stand up to a single punch!

Day three. Day four. Day five....

Twenty days passed in which Bai Xiaochun accepted two thousand challenges from Inner Sect disciples. All of them were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and not a single one could stand up to his fist strike.

None of them even came close to qualifying.

Although it was certainly an impressive scene, the north bank disciples weren't silenced yet, nor was their rage lessened.

It was on the twentieth day that Bai Xiaochun calmly produced a challenge letter belonging to someone in the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Soon, people were shocked to find out that Bai Xiaochun was so strong... that the disciples in the ninth level of Qi Condensation could only withstand two fist strikes before being knocked unconscious.

Some of them even coughed up mouthfuls of blood.

The north bank disciples were staggered, and many of them finally lapsed into silence. Even the four great Chosen, the



Gongsun siblings, Xu Song, and finally Beihan Lie, couldn't endure more than ten successive fist strikes.

Beihan Lie was utterly shocked to find that his Sunset Incantation couldn't stand up to Bai Xiaochun at all!

The Gongsun siblings were astonished. They had been under the belief that they had experienced rapid advancement since the Chosen battles, but now they realized that Bai Xiaochun had advanced far, far more quickly than they had!

Xu Song faced Bai Xiaochun bitterly, and to him, it felt like standing in front of Ghostfang. The terror he felt was something he had never felt before in his life.

Ten fist strikes ended everything. Bai Xiaochun's fleshly body was already in a position to make contact with the first shackle. After he reached the Undying Gold Skin level, he would be at the peak of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming scripture, and would be on the verge of ascending to a higher level.

Such strength made him truly invincible to anyone under Foundation Establishment.

After seeing the four great Chosen fall, the other north bank disciples sat there silently, looking at Bai Xiaochun with complicated expressions. Although rage still burned in their hearts, at long last... they had to admit to his superiority!

In the cultivation world, respect was given to the strong and powerful. Bai Xiaochun had struck terror into the depths of their hearts, and as of this moment, had truly defeated the north bank disciples.

He was still their archenemy, but now, people wanted to work as hard as possible to surpass that archenemy!

It was hard to say who moved first, but soon, the crowd had parted to open a pathway leading toward the Beast Conservatory.

# Chapter 124: Human Controlling Grand Magic

---

Bai Xiaochun was done fighting. When the north bank disciples opened up a path for him, he shook his head and, looking somewhat melancholy, slowly began to walk away.

Mixed emotions could be seen in the eyes of the disciples as they watched him go. Off in the distance, he sighed and swished his sleeve.

“It’s my fault,” he said. “I should have kept a lower profile. Ai.” Inwardly, he was feeling very pleased with himself, even excited. And yet, he maintained the melancholy, lonely look. He made a very bleak silhouette....

The disciples of the north bank were torn, and none of them were really sure what they were feeling. The Gongsun siblings, Xu Song and Beihaan Lie didn’t want to give up so easily, and yet, they felt powerless.

They had worked hard to catch up to Bai Xiaochun, and even believed that they had surpassed him, only to find out that they had been left far behind. That feeling left them feeling very down.

Xu Song sighed. “Perhaps, years from now, it will be him or Ghostfang... who reaches the Legacy Echelon!”

The Gongsun siblings were thinking similar thoughts.

The only one who reacted differently was Beihan Lie, who stood there trembling, his hands clenched into fists. He would not give up. Could not give up. The memory of the Chosen battles was a like an invisible whip that constantly lashed at him.

Even as he gritted his teeth, a hand came to rest on his shoulder. It was none other than his Elder Brother Beihan Feng, the number one Chosen of Sunset Peak. He had long since arrived on the scene, and one of the paper cranes Bai Xiaochun had abandoned belonged to him.

After personally witnessing what Bai Xiaochun had accomplished over the past month or so, Beihan Feng knew very well that he himself... was not a match for Bai Xiaochun. And he was in the tenth level of Qi Condensation.

Because of Bai Xiaochun's terrifying fleshly body power and indescribable speed, he knew that he would be crushed as easily as a dried twig.

"Big bro...." Beihan Lie said.

"Your latent talent exceeds mine," Beihan Feng said encouragingly. "Work hard at your cultivation. Temporary setbacks don't mean anything. Some members of the senior generation who are now in the Legacy Echelon were nobodies back when they were in Qi Condensation or Foundation Establishment. They worked for years to prepare themselves to become the ultimate Chosen of their generation." Although those words had

been spoken to his Junior Brother, they were meant for himself.

Beihan Lie stood there quietly for a long moment before nodding.

“In the future, don’t provoke Bai Xiaochun,” Beihan Feng said softly. “It doesn’t matter how vile he was in the past, as of this moment, he has earned the respect of the north bank. Furthermore, you could learn a bit from how he does things. He knows what to say and how to say it. Knows when to advance and when to retreat. Doesn’t get caught up in his imagination. Doesn’t get entranced by wealth. Stays focused and perseveres. This guy... is terrifying.”

Beihan Feng wasn’t the only one who harbored such thoughts. Of the more than two thousand Inner Sect disciples Bai Xiaochun had defeated, most were thinking the same thing.

Sometimes, Bai Xiaochun was a smooth operator. The north bank had taken the initiative to challenge him to fight, but he hadn’t pushed things too far. It was a decision he had made for the benefit of the north bank, and the more than two thousand disciples he hadn’t beaten, to leave them some face.

Continuing to accept the fight challenges would have been meaningless. Furthermore, he had already accumulated a terrifying number of merit points. For now, the best thing was to simply let matters drop, and allow the remaining challenges to expire half a year later.

Not only would that give some face to the north bank, it would

reduce a bit of the hostility the disciples there felt towards him.

No one said a word. The north bank disciples stood there quietly, and many of them understood what was happening. Even more of them sighed inwardly as respect for Bai Xiaochun bloomed in their hearts.

The four peak lords hovered there, looking down with serious expressions.

“This Bai Xiaochun is actually far more powerful than he was during the Chosen battles....”

“Young Ghostfang has been in secluded meditation this whole time in preparation for Foundation Establishment. Of the two of them, I wonder who is stronger. Years from now, perhaps one of them will enter the Legacy Echelon and become one of the Spirit Stream Sect’s most powerful resources.”

“It’s a very, very difficult thing to enter the Legacy Echelon. The only way to do it is to reach the Gold Core level within two sixty-year cycles. If you exceed two sixty-year cycles, then even reaching Gold Core will only make you a prime elder. Both Ghostfang and Bai Xiaochun have a long road ahead of them.... If one of them really does manage to reach the Legacy Echelon and surpass us peak lords, they may be able to enter the location where the most profound of the Spirit Stream Sect’s reserve powers are located, the Spirit Stream Pocket Realm. Not only are the legacy magics of the prime elders located there, if one is lucky, it’s even possible to meet... Patriarch Spirit Stream!!”

“To date, only about twenty Legacy Echelon members have entered the Spirit Stream Pocket Realm.... They are the true indestructible legacy seeds of the Spirit Stream Sect. Each of them... provide the true power and support for the Spirit Stream Sect.... None of us have any chance of being anything other than peak lords who protect the mountains. Only Li Qinghou... has a real chance!”

The four peak lords exchanged glances and sighed as they recalled Bai Xiaochun’s relationship with Li Qinghou.

Eventually, the crowds dispersed. In the following days, the north bank quieted down and returned to normal. It was the same in the both the Outer and Inner Sects. The fear that had been instilled into the hearts of the disciples manifested in the form of diligent cultivation.

Perhaps they no longer viewed Bai Xiaochun as a true enemy, but they most certainly viewed him as an opponent to surpass. The explosive increase in cultivation activity left the four north bank peak lords very pleased.

Time passed. Half a year.

Bai Xiaochun remained within the Beast Conservatory, the same as ever. Every day, he cultivated the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture and worked with the Waterswamp Kingdom. He also spent time carefully observing all of the beasts in the Beast Conservatory.

He worked hard to care for all of the animals, both the docile ones and the violent ones. As a result, the beasts continued to grow more fond of him. Plus, the more time he spent exploring the jungle, the more familiar he grew with it.

That was especially true of one location deep in the jungle, where a pitch-black cave existed. Boundless streams of black mist roiled out of that cave, which was a famous place on the north bank. The Ancient Beast Chasm.

Supposedly, that cave led straight down to the Nine Serenities Underworld, and was also connected to an arcane pocket realm. Countless vicious beasts lived in the cave, sealed in place by patriarchs of the Spirit Stream Sect countless years ago. They were now a reserve force for the sect, and one of the main reasons why the north bank disciples cultivated their shamanic beast control arts.

However, the arcane pocket realm had a very mysterious origin. Throughout the 10,000 year history of the Spirit Stream Sect, only one small portion of it had been explored. Every few hundred years, the power of the seals would need to be strengthened, which required a significant cost to be paid by the sect. Even still, the vast resources within the arcane pocket realm ensured that it was one of the most important places on the north bank.

In addition to all that, the Ancient Beast Chasm was also the abode of the Spirit Stream Sect's holy beast guardian, the Heavenhorn ink dragon. In fact, it was even part of the seal itself.



The Spirit Stream Sect's most powerful offensive weapon, the Heavenhorn Sword, which had received a tenfold spirit enhancement, had been forged from the shed horn of that very dragon.

The Heavenhorn ink dragon's cultivation base was so terrifying that even Zheng Yuandong had no choice but to call it Senior. Back when the Spirit Stream Sect fought its way from the delta into the Lower Reaches, the Heavenhorn ink dragon had been a follower of Patriarch Spirit Stream, and its contributions to the sect could not be understated.

One day, Bai Xiaochun stood at the edge of the waterfall that led down into the Ancient Beast Chasm. He had visited the location a few times, and had read about the history of the place, and the Heavenhorn ink dragon.

Just like he always did, he tossed one of his medicinal pills down the waterfall, then cleared his throat.

"Senior Heavenhorn," he called out, "It's me again, Bai Xiaochun of the Junior generation. I just want to use the Earthflame here. Uh... the price is the same as usual, right? I'll pay with a medicinal pill like I usually do." Not waiting for a response, he hurried over to a cave he'd opened up a short distance away.

After becoming familiar with the Beast Conservatory jungle, he'd almost immediately noticed the traces of a vein of Earthflame in the area. This small cave he'd excavated connected to that vein, and had become his pill-concocting workstation on the north bank. All of the pills he made for the beasts were concocted here.

However, after reading about the history of this place in the jade slip, he decided to play it safe. Therefore, every time he came to use it, he would toss some spirit medicine down the waterfall, which he viewed as paying the rent in a way.

Although he never got a response when he tossed the medicine down, verbally or otherwise, he'd gotten used to the practice, and therefore continued to do it.

A month later, Bai Xiaochun emerged from the little cave, eyes glittering brightly, his expression one of excitement.

His concocting had gone very smoothly. By now, his results with tier-3 spirit medicine were superb, to say the least. Furthermore, his cultivation base was no longer creeping along slowly. Instead, it had rocketed up to the great circle of the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

“Hahaha! It won't be long now before I can step into the tenth level of Qi Condensation. Then I can get ready for Foundation Establishment!” During the past half year, his Undying Silver Skin had also become even more refined.

Certain that his cultivation base was now even more extraordinary than before, he decided to test out his Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning. To his delight, several cauldrons appeared. By now, he was extremely adept at unleashing and recalling the divine ability.

In his delight, he thought back to a certain magical technique he had used long ago, a magic that, technically, he had created.

“Human Controlling Grand Magic!” Back in his fight with the Luochen Clan, he had unwittingly used the magic on Chen Heng, and it had left a deep impression on him. Over the years, his desire to perfect it had only grown.

He had no cultivators to practice it on, but there were plenty of beasts in the Beast Conservatory. After a bit more thought, his excitement grew as he ran out to find some beasts to test out his Human Controlling Grand Magic on.

During the following days, the jungle was quite a chaotic place. Bai Xiaochun soon found that his Human Controlling Grand Magic didn't work on anything with a very large frame, or a high cultivation base. However, when it came to small beasts with cultivation bases in the fifth level of Qi Condensation or lower, he did have some limited success.

Feeling a bit depressed, but not willing to admit defeat, he thought more about his Human Controlling Grand Magic. Eventually, he came to the conclusion that this technique of using spiritual power to control an opponent's body and mind... was missing something.

If he could just find what it was missing... he could make it work!

Even as Bai Xiaochun worked with his Human Controlling Grand Magic, deep in the Ancient Beast Chasm was a blue eye that had

opened at some point recently. It was staring out of the Ancient Beast Chasm at Bai Xiaochun, and a strange gleam could be seen deep within.

Suddenly, a profoundly ancient voice murmured, “Human Controlling.... Years ago, Eccentric Frigidsect had the same idea.”

## Chapter 125: The Ol' Nightstalker Beast....

---

The divine ability which Bai Xiaochun had named the Human Controlling Grand Magic turned into a sort of game for the beasts. They would often find themselves mysteriously floating up into the air, only to fall down moments later.

Occasionally, they would even stand up on two legs. The beasts weren't frightened by what was happening, and actually found it rather amusing. It even reached the point where some of the smaller beasts would run up to Bai Xiaochun as soon as they saw him, hoping to have some fun playing the new game.

Some of the larger beasts like the flying tigers would sometimes see Bai Xiaochun waving his finger at them and muttering to himself. Soon, he would sigh and walk away looking depressed. Such beasts were confused about what exactly Bai Xiaochun was doing.

A month later, he decided to temporarily abandon his work with the Human Controlling Grand Magic.

"I can definitely get this magic to work," he thought. "When it does, it will shake heaven and earth. However, I need to take things slow. Once I get a bit stronger, I can cultivate it to perfection!" He didn't really want to give up, but after a month without the slightest bit of progress, he had to admit that it was time to move on. He was about to start cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom again when he suddenly thought of the spirit wings he possessed.

“When the old granny gave me the Protomagnetic Pearl and these spirit wings, she said something about Arcane Gravitational Repulsion....” Eyes shining, he pulled the wings out to examine them. After a few days of study, he realized that he was yet again dealing with something that would have to wait until the future.

At long last, he buried his ambitions and started cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom.

Time passed, and before long Bai Xiaochun had been on the north bank for two years. As for the Beastbirth Seed, it had already grown into a three-meter-tall Beastbirth Flower, although it hadn’t bloomed yet. According to Bai Xiaochun’s calculations, it wouldn’t be too long before the flower opened up.

As for his Waterswamp Kingdom, he cultivated it constantly, and it grew more and more impressive. Whenever he unleashed it, rumbling sounds could be heard, and a strange power appeared that didn’t come from the world around him.

By this point, he had spent time observing all of the more than nine hundred animals in the Beast Conservatory. He knew them like the back of his own hand, and yet, his life essence spirit still hadn’t taken shape.

“Don’t tell me my observations have been insufficient? I should probably go observe some even more powerful beasts.” He thought about the matter for some time, and finally, looked over in the direction of the Ancient Beast Chasm. After a moment of hesitation, he decided that going there was too dangerous. With that, his eyes began to shine, and he turned to look at the four

mountain peaks of the north bank.

“Each of the four mountain peaks has a spirit beast guardian!”

On the summit of each of the mountain peaks was an extremely powerful beast assigned to protect that mountain. Although none of them could compare to the Heavenhorn ink dragon, they were all extraordinary in their own way.

Every few days, they would appear in the open, either flying in the sky, or roaring at the tops of their lungs to shake the entire area. When that happened, large numbers of disciples would look on in awe and envy.

In his time on the north bank, Bai Xiaochun had noticed this phenomenon. That was especially true of the seven-colored phoenix from Irispetal Peak, which left a particularly profound impression on him.

After making up his mind, he hurried out of the Beast Conservatory. Eventually, was on the path leading past the trial platform. It wasn't the first time he had laid eyes on the huge beast statue beneath it. Every time he did so, he got a very strange feeling, which was the same thing that happened to many other disciples who studied the statue.

His observations of it in the past had brought him no gains, so eventually, he paid it no attention. As he was walking by it this time, he happened to glance over for a moment before turning to fix his gaze on Irispetal Peak.

Even as he prepared to hurry along in that direction, his heart seized, as if something dangerous were about to occur. The Protomagnetic Wings appeared behind him, and he sped forward several dozen meters.

Even as he moved, a black blur sped past the spot he had just been standing in, and a terrifying clashing sound rang out, like that of two rows of sharp teeth making contact.

The shocking volume of the sound caused the surroundings to shake; it would be difficult to imagine the level of power behind it, or the hatred that could cause teeth to snap shut in such a fashion.

The black blur turned out to be a huge black dog, roughly three meters tall. It was like a young bull, albeit somewhat emaciated, with scraggly fur that made it look like a wild dog.

It was currently staring at Bai Xiaochun with a ferocious expression on its face. Saliva dripped off of its sharp fangs, and its eyes glowed red, as if with insanity.

Bai Xiaochun was so shocked that sweat popped out on his forehead. However, as soon as he laid eyes on the big black dog, he recognized it.

“Hey, aren’t you Beihan Lie’s Nightstalker Beast? You—” Before he could finish speaking, the black dog shivered and then ran off into the distance. Apparently, if it didn’t strike true on the first blow, it would retreat at all costs.



Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback. Of course, he wasn't alone in the area. There were other north bank disciples around, and they recognized the dog immediately. Gasps could be heard, and soon people were discussing the matter amongst themselves.

“That was Elder Brother Beihan's Nightstalker Beast. What a poor little dog. Elder Brother Beihan refuses to take care of it now, and nobody else dares to approach it. Even the elders feel bad about it....”

“Yeah, that's right. Ever since that one day, the Nightstalker Beast can occasionally be seen lurking around the north bank. Once I saw it standing on a hill, looking up into the night. It seemed sad.”

“What a pity. Apparently it was trying to ambush Bai Xiaochun....”

Bai Xiaochun blinked. After hearing some of the things people were saying, he felt bad. Looking off into the direction the dog had fled, he resolved to look into the issue of why it wanted to ambush him.

“What else could I have done in that situation?” he thought, sighing. “I told Beihan Lie he should concede. I even told him that even I fear my own attacks.” Sighing again, he turned and headed toward Irispetal Peak.

As a Prestige disciple, he had almost unlimited access to various

locations in the sect, even on the north bank. After cautiously climbing up to the summit of Irispetal Peak, he neared the cave at the top, but didn't enter. Instead, he settled cross-legged onto a nearby boulder, then waited quietly.

The wait lasted for three days. Finally, a sharp cry rang out into the dawn sky, piercing through the clouds as a seven-colored light began to shine out from within the cave. Then, a seven-colored phoenix flew out, stretching its wings wide as it soared elegantly up into the air. When the sunlight hit its body, the seven-colored reflections it cast were dazzling. Bai Xiaochun was shaken as he realized the terrifying level of power that was contained within the phoenix. Even with his amazing Undying Silver Skin, he was far from a match for the thing.

As he watched, he committed the image of the phoenix to memory, branding it on his heart. He observed it for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, whereupon the phoenix circled back around into its cave, completely ignoring him in the process.

Taking a deep breath, he closed his eyes and mentally recalled the image of the seven-colored phoenix, then continued to wait. Another five days passed, and at dawn, the phoenix reappeared.

Time passed. Bai Xiaochun stayed on Irispetal Peak for several months to observe the phoenix, only occasionally returning to the Beast Conservatory to handle various affairs before hurrying back.

The disciples of Irispetal Peak soon learned of the matter, and were a bit confused. Most people didn't pay much attention to it, but there were some Inner Sect disciples who began to speculate

about what he was doing.

Another month passed, and Bai Xiaochun felt that his observation of the phoenix was complete. Next, he headed toward Sunset Peak.

The spirit beast guardian of Sunset Peak was a black, three-eyed raven. It was fully six meters long, surrounded by swirling blackness that distorted the air. It didn't come out very often; Bai Xiaochun only saw it twice in an entire month.

Whenever it flew out, lightning would crackle in the area. The raven always appeared in the darkness of night, never during the light of day.

Because of that, Bai Xiaochun got used to remaining focused during the night. Three months passed, and he saw the raven five times. Every time it appeared, he would pay close attention, and would devote himself fully to observation. Gradually, he felt as if his life essence spirit were showing signs of appearing.

The spirit beast guardian of Archway Peak was not a flying creature, but rather, an enormous lizard. It moved slowly, but radiated incredible energy. It was much easier for Bai Xiaochun to observe; whenever it emerged from its cave, it would perch on the highest boulder at the top of Archway Peak, where it would gaze off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun spent several months there, and was able to observe it in much more detail than the seven-colored phoenix and the

three-eyed raven.

The spirit beast guardian of Ghostfang Peak was quite strange. It almost wasn't even appropriate to call it a spirit beast. It was a mountain ghost. It looked like an amalgamation of countless other beasts, formed together like a mountain. After gaining consciousness, it called itself a mountain ghost.

It was humanoid in shape, with long black fur and human-like eyes which were located below its wolf-like maw. It also had two curling horns at the top of its head. Its lower torso was scaled like a snake, and it had a tiger's head on its chest. Stretching out behind it was a long tail.

It carried a ghastly bone trident in its hand wherever it went, and every time it came out into the open, clouds formed up above in the sky, covering both the sun and the moon. In the darkness which resulted, its eyes would glow with mysterious light.

The mere sight of it left Bai Xiaochun trembling in fear. He could sense that the thing was aware of his existence, but that it was so far above him that it didn't deign to even notice him. Whenever it appeared on the summit of the mountain, it would throw its head back and let out a soundless howl.

That howl would cause countless stones on Ghostfang Peak to tremble, and they would only go still when the mountain ghost returned to its cave.

Time flowed by, and Bai Xiaochun went back and forth between

the mountains to carry out his observations. Gradually, it felt more and more like his life essence spirit was forming. However, he was getting the increasing sense that he had reached some barrier that had yet to be broken through.

The disciples of the north bank gradually realized that he was observing the spirit beast guardians. Most didn't understand why, but Xu Song, Beihan Lie, and a few other Inner Sect disciples were fairly certain what was going on, and it caused their hearts to pound.

“He's cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom!” Quite a few Inner Sect disciples came to that conclusion. After all, cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom involved long-term observation of numerous beasts.

“The Waterswamp Kingdom is a secret magic on the same level as Ghosts Haunt the Night... However, the results differ for every person who cultivates it. Some can unleash incredible power, others are very weak.”

“The fact that Bai Xiaochun is observing those beasts implies that his life essence spirit hasn't been born yet....”

“I wonder what his life essence spirit will be like...?”

Discussions raged among the Inner Sect disciples, and Bai Xiaochun continued his observations. The process lasted for a year.

During that time, others besides the Inner Sect disciples came to pay close attention to what was happening. The peak lords of the four mountains, the sect leader, and even Li Qinghou were all secretly observing Bai Xiaochun's progress with the Waterswamp Kingdom.

All of them were surprised. Generally speaking, observing beasts in the Beast Conservatory should have been enough to form the life essence spirit of the Waterswamp Kingdom. But it didn't seem enough for Bai Xiaochun. He went on to observe the spirit beast guardians of the four mountain peaks. And yet... that wasn't enough either.

“Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit seems very difficult to form!”

“Life essence spirits vary from person to person. They form based on the hidden world which exists inside each person, and create a mysterious and unfathomable illusory spirit....”

“What will Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit be...?”

Everyone watched as Bai Xiaochun concluded his observations of the four spirit beast guardians. With that, he trudged through the north bank, thinking about how he had nothing left to observe. He had the strong feeling that he was only a step away from breaking through the barrier and giving birth to the Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit.

However, that one step seemed infinitely vast.

Bai Xiaochun was confused, and unsure of what to do next. As he walked along through the north bank, he headed past the trial platform, and subconsciously looked over at the statue beneath the platform.

He had walked past this location many times, and every time he did, he had the feeling that there was something strange about the statue. This time, he stopped in place and looked over. Then, a tremor ran through him, and his eyes shone with incredulity.

# Chapter 126: Build Up To Success

---

Before, he had felt something strange when looking at the statue, something that seemed to make him wish to fight. However, there was something deeper to it than that, something that he couldn't quite put his finger on.

Now, perhaps because of having observed the four spirit beast guardians, or perhaps because of his nearness to a life essence spirit breakthrough, he suddenly found himself observing, not the battle beast as a whole, but rather, its scales!

They seemed like nothing more than scales on a statue, but as soon as he focused on them, it felt as if the Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit inside of him were suddenly writhing with increased power.

At the same time, he could almost hear something primeval and ancient roaring in his ears.

He was wondering if it was an illusion or not, and was just about to focus further, when the sensation vanished. At the same time, the life essence spirit inside of him suddenly went still.

Taking a deep breath, he walked up to the statue and sat down cross-legged in front of it. Then he looked up, certain that the feeling he had just experienced was no illusion.

“This statue... is very, very odd!” With that, he focused on looking, not at the statue as a whole, but at the countless



individual scales.

Although they seemed like nothing more than simple scales, Bai Xiaochun had only just now realized that they were very, very difficult to commit to memory. He could see them there right in front of him, but simply could not memorize their shape and image.

That did not serve to discourage him, though; it caused him to grow more focused. Eyes flashing, he looked more closely at the scales.

Time flew by, and soon it was evening. Considering that the trial platform was a central location on the north bank, disciples would often pass by, and soon people noticed Bai Xiaochun sitting there staring at the statue. Although it was a peculiar sight, nobody really stopped to pay him much attention.

The next morning at dawn, the disciples who had seen Bai Xiaochun there the day before once again noticed him as they went past the trial platform. Apparently he hadn't moved the entire night, but had remained sitting there staring with bloodshot eyes at the statue in front of him. The astonishment of the north bank disciples grew.

Bai Xiaochun was now certain that he could only make his breakthrough by means of this statue. He had already done everything else possible with regards to the life essence spirit. He had observed everything in the Beast Conservatory, as well as the four spirit beast guardians. He had even secretly observed many of the ordinary battle beasts of the north bank disciples.

The life essence spirit of the Waterswamp Kingdom still had not appeared, and if he had not received any indication that it would, he might have decided to stop wasting his time with it. But he could sense that the life essence spirit was on the verge of coming to life; he just didn't know how to make it happen. So close, yet so far!

That uneasy sensation was something he couldn't accept easily. Therefore, he was grasping hard to this opportunity, and his persevering personality was in full effect.

He sat there with the same focus he called upon when he concocted medicine. It didn't matter that night came and went, or that his eyes were bloodshot. It didn't matter if a second day began to pass. Bai Xiaochun didn't stop.

In fact, he even had the feeling that if he gave up at this moment, his Waterswamp Kingdom... might never be able to give birth to a life essence spirit. The opportunity he had now must be seized, and the life essence spirit had to break out of its cocoon!

"I refuse to believe that I'll fail!" he thought, grinding his teeth. With that, he continued to observe the scales and try to commit their shape and image to memory.

Without even thinking about it, he sealed himself off from the world. He abandoned all of his other senses and focused completely on his sight. Days began to pass. On the fourth day at dawn, the north bank disciples were more surprised than ever by

his presence, and soon word began to spread.

“Bai Xiaochun has been sitting by the trial platform statue for four days now.... What is he doing? Observing the statue?”

“That trial platform statue is pretty strange. I’ve heard of people observing it in the past, hoping to gain something from it. However, to this day, nobody has ever succeeded except for Eldest Brother Ghostfang!”

As word spread further and further, the north bank Inner Sect disciples began to pay closer attention. People even began to gather nearby to watch Bai Xiaochun. His completely bedeviled state caused many people to gasp.

“So, he’s only trying to observe it and commit it to memory, not gain full enlightenment. Well, it’s like I said. The trial platform statue has some profound secrets buried deep inside. Not just anybody can gain enlightenment of it.”

“I’ve read some ancient records that said the statue was pulled out of the Ancient Beast Chasm four thousand years ago. It’s hard to say whether or not some members of the Senior generation ever gained enlightenment, but as for ordinary disciples.... before Ghostfang, nobody has ever succeeded.”

“I tried once, believe it or not. In the end, I had no choice but to give up. I never felt a single thing. Only people like Ghostfang can reach that legendary state of deep enlightenment via observation. Some people have lasted for ten days, or even fifteen. The limit is

twenty, though. After that, people simply pass out.”

When Beihan Lie, the Gongsun siblings, Xu Song, and other Inner Sect Chosen realized that Bai Xiaochun was simply observing the statue, they breathed sighs of relief.

As for the four peak lords, when they saw him beneath the statue, their eyes shone with anticipation.

“I wonder if Bai Xiaochun will be like Ghostfang, and actually benefit from the statue.”

“It requires the right circumstances, the right personality, and the right amount of hard work. This kind of observation is like looking at a canvas randomly splashed with paint. Some people see nothing but chaos, but others see order. Some people see another image beneath the splash of paint. And some people, a vast minority, might be able to see... something completely different from everyone else.”

Bai Xiaochun truly was just observing, and not seeking deep enlightenment. His eyes were bloodshot as he stared at the scales, which seemed to grow larger and larger until they replaced the world around him. He saw a heaven and earth filled with floating objects that he couldn't quite see. It was like a blurry illusion, impossible to make out clearly. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't care. The only thing he wanted to do was memorize the shape and image of the scales.

He wasn't even sure how many attempts he had made. A

thousand? Ten thousand? Maybe more? He was completely and utterly absorbed in the process, despite the fact that he was failing over and over again.

Time passed. Five days. Six days. Seven days.... Soon, ten days had gone by. His observation of the statue was drawing on his vital energy, and his body was beginning to suffer, but he persisted.

On the nineteenth day, Beihan Lie and the other Chosen were completely convinced that Bai Xiaochun would only last for another day. After his vital energy grew weak enough, he would lapse into unconsciousness.

“It took fifteen days for Ghostfang to enter into a state of deep enlightenment, and he awoke from his trance after twenty-seven days. His later progress with Ghosts Haunt the Night had a lot to do with that session of enlightenment!”

“Bai Xiaochun has already wasted nineteen days and hasn’t reached deep enlightenment. Regardless of the level of his cultivation base, he can’t match up to Ghostfang in this situation.”

“The statue is completely enigmatic and unfathomable. Lots of people have tested it out, and if you don’t succeed the first time, it’s only harder after that. Tomorrow, he’ll pass out. After he wakes up and restores his vital energy, though, it will be too late.”

Beihan Lie and the other Chosen felt that way, and so did the four peak lords, all of whom were sighing regretfully.

Gradually, Bai Xiaochun's nineteenth day observing the statue passed. The sun set, and then dawn broke upon the twentieth day. As sunlight filled the sky, virtually everyone assumed that Bai Xiaochun would lose consciousness. But then, looks of shock filled their eyes as the twentieth day ended and the twenty-first began.

Bai Xiaochun didn't pass out. Although he was looking a bit gaunt, he still managed to hang on.

Twenty-one days. Twenty-two days. Twenty-three days.... As time passed, astonishment grew. By the time the thirtieth day passed, the peak lords were completely astonished.

"I can't believe how much vital energy Bai Xiaochun has!"

"At the most, ordinary disciples would last for ten days. Body refinement disciples might last for fifteen. Chosen like Ghostfang could last for twenty days at the most. Without entering a state of deep enlightenment, one's vital energy will waste away, and they will lapse into unconsciousness. But Bai Xiaochun... has lasted for so long!"

"But what's the point? Even if he lasts longer, if he doesn't reach deep enlightenment, it will all have been a waste."

Beihan Lie and the others were completely shocked, and were finally starting to understand how powerful Bai Xiaochun's fleshly body was. And yet, they all sighed; without achieving deep enlightenment, simply lasting for a long time would do no good.

Soon, another ten days had passed, and Bai Xiaochun was still completely immersed in his attempts to commit the scales to memory. It was impossible to say how many actual attempts he had made. Perhaps 50,000, perhaps 100,000. Every single time was a failure.

The fiftieth day passed, and then the sixtieth day. Countless disciples were profoundly shaken by what Bai Xiaochun was doing. They almost couldn't believe the deep reserves of vital energy he possessed. Never could they have imagined that he would hang on for so long. Without incredible fleshly body power, it would have been impossible.

Eventually, the seventieth day arrived, and Bai Xiaochun trembled. He was clearly much thinner than before, and it appeared as if his vital energy and fleshly body were reaching their limits.

The audience which had gathered noticed him shaking, and immediately began to comment.

“He must be about to finish. Only a few more days now, and he'll pass out.”

“He never reached deep enlightenment. What a waste.”

Although most people in the audience felt that way, by the time the amber light of evening began to spread out....

Bai Xiaochun's eyes revealed... blankness.

And then, a moment later, his eyes slowly closed!

Upon closing his eyes, his mind was filled with the complete image of a scale... after countless failed attempts, he had finally succeeded!

In the instant the scale appeared, a rumbling like that of thunder filled his mind, and he gasped. His aura winked out, seemingly leaving behind nothing except his body. He had finally slipped into... the legendary state of deep enlightenment!

As of that moment, the eyes of the audience widened. This was such an unexpected development that most people almost couldn't believe it.

Bai Xiaochun had entered deep enlightenment, not by a coincidence or destiny, but simply by hard work!

This chance regarding the life essence spirit of the Waterswamp Kingdom also came with a measure of enlightenment. Furthermore, his display of hard work vastly exceeded that of anyone else!

Although his powers of understanding might not be on par with Ghostfang's, he had worked for five times as long to do what Ghostfang did, and that was because of his fleshly body and his vital energy. Because of his cultivation of the Undying Live Forever



Technique, his strength gave him incredible reserves of energy!

# Chapter 127: Soul Floating In The Void

---

Deep enlightenment was a state in which one's soul essentially merged with heaven and earth, connecting with the world to understand and be enlightened regarding natural and magical laws.

Mortals could accidentally slip into deep enlightenment, although the likelihood was incredibly small to the point of almost being impossible. Even Qi Condensation cultivators would have a very difficult time entering such a state, and if they did, it would cause a huge stir among anyone who found out about it.

Almighty beings with incredible cultivation bases would occasionally enter that state to comprehend the profound transformations of the world, and the great Daos of heaven and earth.

For the last thousand years in the Spirit Stream Sect, only two people had ever slipped into deep enlightenment. One of them was Ghostfang, with his spectacular natural talent. Not even Shangguan Tianyou had been able to match up to him in this regard.

The other person to succeed was now sitting beneath the statute, having observed it for seventy days in a row. Bai Xiaochun!

The surrounding north bank disciples were left gasping at the astounding scene.

“Bai Xiaochun... he... is in deep enlightenment?!?! He’s the only person to have done it other than Eldest Brother Ghostfang!”

“Hmph. How could this deep enlightenment even compare to Eldest Brother Ghostfang’s? He did it in fifteen days, but Bai Xiaochun took seventy!”

“That’s not the way to look at it. It just means that if we could hang on for seventy days, then we could reach deep enlightenment too. Except we can’t! Look how hard Bai Xiaochun worked!”

In addition to the cries of shock, there were other mixed feelings among the crowd. Some people seemed indignant, others jealous, and some contemptuous. Regardless of the specifics, everyone could sense how hard Bai Xiaochun had worked, and how much he had struggled to endure. Furthermore, all of them were envious to some degree.

At the same time, six beams of light appeared up in the air. The fastest among them were not the four peak lords of the north bank, but rather... Li Qinghou from the south bank!

In almost the moment that Bai Xiaochun slipped into a trance, he appeared. Waving his finger in the direction of the trial platform, he caused a screen of light to descend, surrounding Bai Xiaochun so that no one could disturb him.

It was at around this time that the four peak lords arrived, as well as Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong.

The old woman from Irispetal Peak peak looked over at Li Qinghou, and then the surrounding crowd. Suppressing her surprise at the fact that Bai Xiaochun had entered deep enlightenment, she barked, “Seal the entire area surrounding the trial platform. Don’t open it until Bai Xiaochun awakens.”

“If anyone disturbs Bai Xiaochun, it will be considered treason, and punished accordingly!” Zheng Yuandong added. “Get the Hall of Justice over here immediately to stand guard!” In response, the Outer Sect disciples bowed their heads and clasped hands respectfully.

Soon, several dozen disciples from the Hall of Justice arrived and stationed themselves in various positions around the statue, where they sat down cross-legged to act as Dharma Protectors.

By this time, word had spread from the Outer Sect disciples. Everyone on the north bank knew that Bai Xiaochun had entered deep enlightenment. Beihan Lie and the other Chosen emerged from their immortal’s caves, shocked, and began to hurry toward the trial platform.

When they saw that Bai Xiaochun was being guarded by the Hall of Justice, they weren’t sure what to think.

“He’s... actually in deep enlightenment...?”

“Seventy days! He endured for seventy days!”

“There’s no way he’s that far ahead of us. I refuse to believe it!” Beihan Lie, the Gongsun siblings, Xu Song, and the other Inner Sect Chosen were filled with incredibly complex thoughts and feelings.

Up in midair, the four peak lords looked down at Bai Xiaochun as he sat there cross-legged, eyes closed and aura dispersed. All of them were sighing.

“I never thought he would actually pull it off.”

“The kid prepared long and hard. His success was no fluke.”

“I wonder how many days he’ll remain in deep enlightenment. Ghostfang lasted for twenty-seven days.”

As the peak lords sighed, Zheng Yuandong’s eyes shone with anticipation, and he started laughing heartily. As of this point, he had the feeling that his Master would surely be glad to have an apprentice like Bai Xiaochun.

Li Qinghou’s face was covered with a smile, and his eyes shone with approval and praise.

Considering that Bai Xiaochun was in the middle of the Spirit Stream Sect, with the Hall of Justice protecting him, and surrounded by a spell formation personally set up by Li Qinghou, nobody under the Gold Core stage possibly be able to disturb his deep enlightenment.

Even if a Gold Core expert dared to show up, they would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt.

After looking on for a bit longer, the peak lords, the sect leader, and Li Qinghou all left.

The north bank disciples looked on, sighing. Their main speculations were regarding why the Hall of Justice had been called, and also... they wondered how long Bai Xiaochun would stay in deep enlightenment.

“He used five times as long as to succeed. I bet he’ll last for twenty percent as long as Eldest Brother Ghostfang. Five or six days at the most.”

“I bet he’ll pass seven days!”

Numerous cold snorts could be heard echoing out within the crowd. There were many disciples on the north bank, and none of them had forgotten that Bai had been named their archenemy. Although they had been impressed by his strength, deep down, there were still quite a few who harbored animosity. There were also many who were jealous of him.

Time passed. Three days later, Bai Xiaochun still hadn’t stirred. However, the vital energy which he had spent in his efforts to gain enlightenment was slowly building back up.

Furthermore, now that he had entered deep enlightenment, his aura was gone, as if his soul had left his body to merge with heaven, earth and the void itself.

During that time, the blankness within his closed eyes spread to fill his entire person. He had no concept of time, no idea of how long he had been in this state. He only knew the image of the scales. The statue in front of him almost seemed alive, bursting with a savage aura that seemed to be dragging him into the world that existed in its right clawed hand.

It was almost as if the void were truly being torn apart, and his consciousness were being sucked through the rift into an illusory world. His mind was a complete blank. He had forgotten who he was, or why he had come here. He only knew the illusory world around him.

He saw an enormous creature, so large it was difficult to put into words. It was so huge that Bai Xiaochun felt like a mere scale on the thing's back.

Shockingly, the creature was none other than the giant crocodilian beast that formed the statue on the north bank.

It lived in this illusory world, looking up into the sky, into the heavens, staring at a seemingly invisible figure, something that didn't even exist. Suddenly, it reached up into the sky and made a grasping motion.

A sound like booming thunder echoed out in all directions. Bai

Xiaochun watched mutely as its clawed hand tore open a hole in the sky. Rumbling sounds filled the sky, and all that Bai Xiaochun could think about was that hand.

In fact, if Bai Xiaochun were able to remember who he was, he would immediately realize that the clawed hand... closely resembled the clawed hand that Ghostfang could unleash with Ghosts Haunt the Night.

While Bai Xiaochun was in the middle of the illusory world, time flew by outside. Already, far more time had passed than the five or six days that many of the disciples had assumed would be the limit. Ten days had passed.

Every day, more north bank disciples came to congregate around the trial platform to watch Bai Xiaochun. Some of the Inner Sect disciples even chose to meditate in the area.

Bei Han Lie and the other Chosen were also present.

They watched as Bai Xiaochun's deep enlightenment lasted for ten days, and mixed emotions could be seen in their eyes. While the Inner Sect disciples sat there quietly, the Outer Sect disciples were in an uproar.

"I can't believe he lasted ten days!"

"Yeah, but I really doubt that he could possibly last twenty-seven days like Eldest Brother Ghostfang did!"



The Outer Sect disciples continue to discuss the matter as time marched on. Eleven days. Twelve days. Thirteen days.... Eventually, the twentieth day arrived!

The north bank was completely shaken by this point. All of the Outer Sect disciples were flabbergasted, and were paying close attention to find out... if Bai Xiaochun would surpass Ghostfang's record of twenty-seven days.

“There's no way!!”

“He took five times as long as Eldest Brother Ghostfang to enter deep enlightenment. His latent talent clearly doesn't measure up. There's absolutely no way he'll surpass the record!”

Words such as this were common among the disciples. Even many of the Inner Sect disciples felt the same. Gradually, the twenty-second day arrived, and the twenty-fifth. By that time, the voices were silenced, and shock began to fill the hearts of everyone present.

On the evening of the twenty-sixth day, a new figure appeared in midair above the trial platform, a young man wearing a long black robe.

It was none other than Ghostfang himself!

He had been in secluded meditation preparing for Foundation

Establishment, but had received a message from a fellow disciple notifying him about what was going on with Bai Xiaochun, and had thus emerged.

Bai Xiaochun was the only disciple in the Spirit Stream Sect who could attract his attention. As soon as he appeared above the trial platform, countless disciples of both the Inner and Outer sects looked up with sober, respectful expressions, even fear. One after another, they clasped hands in greeting.

“Greetings, Eldest Brother Ghostfang.”

Even Beihan Lie and the other Chosen did the same. As the voices echoed out, Ghostfang seemed to not even have heard them. His entire attention appeared to be focused on Bai Xiaochun, and his eyes were shining with a strange light.

“I began my observation with the beast’s sharp claws. After forming the image in my mind, I entered deep enlightenment, and found myself in an illusory world. I lost myself within the ancient beast’s heaven-shaking, earth-shattering claws, and found it hard to emerge. After completing my deep enlightenment, I didn’t see if anything had changed about the ancient beast.

“Bai Xiaochun, now that you are in deep enlightenment, I wonder if you will be able to emerge from within the clawed hand....”

# Chapter 128: Alert

---

Within the illusory world, everything was crumbling and shattering. As the ancient beast's clawed hand ripped everything to shreds, even Bai Xiaochun's mind seemed to be affected.

His consciousness began to shatter and disperse, and he looked around blankly. To see those claws ripping apart the heavens was completely and utterly shocking.

Such power was unimaginable, and yet, he also desired to possess such power himself. He wanted to be able to rip apart heaven and earth. Now that the rubble was beginning to disperse, he suddenly wanted to do everything he could to absorb the power, to understand it, to make it his own.

The more such thoughts filled him, the more his awareness of himself faded. This process went on for a short time until a tremor ran through him, and he realized that something odd was happening. He suddenly remembered that his purpose in coming to this place didn't have anything to do with becoming engrossed with the clawed hand.

The thought grew more and more intense until it superseded the enticing power of the claws. The shattered remnants of his consciousness slowly stopped moving, and then began to move in reverse, returning to him and becoming whole once again.

Within the illusion, the enormous beast once again appeared; however, this time, what moved was not its clawed hand, but its

tail. It was like a whip, smashing the earth to pieces and destroying the heavens. A massive rumbling boom exploded out into the world.

Bai Xiaochun's consciousness once again shattered, and he began to sink into blankness.

In the outside world, he had been sitting there in a state of deep enlightenment for twenty-six days. Night fell, and the sun rose. The twenty-seventh day. Soon, it was night again.

Among the countless north bank disciples who had gathered near Bai Xiaochun and the trial platform, faces flickered with shock, and eyes went wide.

Everyone, including Beihan Lie, the Gongsun siblings, Xu Song, and the other Chosen of the Inner Sect were being crushed by waves of shock.

After a long period of oppressive silence, countless disciples suddenly burst into a huge commotion.

“He passed... twenty-seven days? He surpassed Eldest Brother Ghostfang!”

“Heavens! How deeply will Bai Xiaochun sink into this enlightenment?!”

“How long will he last? Thirty days? Thirty-five days? Or maybe

even... forty days?!?!”

Everyone was completely and utterly shocked by the motionless and aura-less Bai Xiaochun.

And yet, they had allowed themselves to be shocked a bit too early.

Time continued to pass. Thirty days. Thirty-three days. Thirty-seven days.... By the time the fortieth day arrived, the north bank disciples were completely dumbstruck.

They weren't the only ones. The four peaks lords were breathless. Each additional day spent in deep enlightenment was significant to the extreme. After all, a single day of deep enlightenment was like years spent in normal meditation.

Ghostfang said nothing, but his eyes shone with a shocking light as he looked at Bai Xiaochun. He wanted to know... exactly what it was that Bai Xiaochun was seeing!

“He must not have lost himself in the claw like me,” he thought. “In that case, what came next?”

Back in the illusory world, Bai Xiaochun's consciousness was trembling. He wasn't sure how long he had been lost within the tail of the ancient beast. However, as his consciousness began to dissipate, the same thought arose once again... the power of the tail was not what he had come here for.

“That’s not it!” he murmured quietly.

In that moment, his consciousness ceased to disperse. Simultaneously, the ancient beast opened its mouth to reveal something far more terrifying than its claws or tail... razor sharp fangs!

Row upon row of sharp teeth, emanating a murderous aura that made them seem capable of destroying anything and everything. It was as if a single bite from those teeth could cause the entire world to go dark and end in destruction.

“No,” Bai Xiaochun murmured. “This is not why I came here!” His voice echoed back and forth around him, growing louder and louder.

“I came here to observe the ancient beast, for the purpose of... bringing life to my Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit!

“I don’t want the claws or tail or teeth of this ancient beast. I want... the whole thing. I need to observe it in its entirety. I need to fix its image into my mind. That will form the basis of my Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit!

“Furthermore, the beast itself will not become my life essence spirit, it will be absorbed as a mere portion of it!

“That is why I came here. That... is my purpose!” By the end, Bai

Xiaochun's voice was not a murmur, but a roar. The illusory world rumbled violently as Bai Xiaochun's consciousness tumbled back together from all parts of the world, then shot toward the enormous beast in a beam of light.

It moved with incredible speed; in the blink of an eye, it closed in on the beast and then slammed into it. As the light spread out through the beast, Bai Xiaochun's mind shook, and he suddenly felt as if... he was becoming the enormous beast!

During the process of the transformation, he came to understand everything about it. There could be no better observation method... than this. In fact, this was not even really observation, it was a merging. He was... becoming one with the beast.

Bai Xiaochun's consciousness spread out through the entirety of the beast, understanding it, analyzing it, observing it... controlling it!

From the flesh and blood, he moved on to the scales, the spikes, the claws, the teeth, the bones, even the heart.... Time meant nothing to him as his consciousness filled the beast, coming to a deep understanding of it.

At a certain point, Bai Xiaochun's consciousness trembled as it completely filled the ancient creature, and he... became the beast.

He threw his head back and roared, causing the entire world around him to tremble. Next, the beast distorted, and by some profound and unfathomable means, it rapidly changed shape,

transforming into a black, three-eyed raven!

The enormous black raven began to fly through the world at top speed, its eyes shining as though they belonged to Bai Xiaochun. In the blink of an eye, the raven rippled, transforming into a seven-colored phoenix.

Then it became a huge lizard, and then the mountain ghost from Ghostfang Peak. Under the control of Bai Xiaochun's consciousness, the transformations continued. One after another, nearly a thousand beasts from the Beast Conservatory appeared.

Flying tigers, pangolins, huge bears, spirit deer. All sorts of beasts flickered in and out, without end. Even the north bank disciples' beasts that Bai Xiaochun had secretly observed could be seen.

Eventually, rumbling sounds echoed out as the beasts vanished, and Bai Xiaochun's consciousness became a swirling mist, which pulsed and writhed as though some terrifying spirit were being born inside.

It was none other than Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit.

It was impossible to see exactly what kind of spirit it was; not even Bai Xiaochun's consciousness could make it out. It was as if... its spirit body wasn't complete yet.



Even incomplete, it emanated a terrifying energy. There was some enormous figure inside that mist, covered with terrifying bone spurs, radiating an indescribable pressure. The mist seethed and churned as it slowly condensed upon itself.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's consciousness was starting to unravel. Ten percent. Twenty percent. Thirty percent.... In the blink of an eye, it was fifty percent dispersed!

As that happened, the illusory world trembled and shook. Unexpectedly, the life essence spirit inside of the mist began to show signs that it was also going to disperse.

"Faster!" Bai Xiaochun's consciousness howled amidst the massive rumbling sounds. "Faster! My consciousness is dispersing. Life essence spirit... you must awaken!"

And yet, it continued to disperse even more quickly. Sixty percent. Seventy percent. Eighty percent.... Ninety percent!

Rifts spread out through the illusory world as it began to collapse. A massive wind sprang up, sweeping across everything, attempting to disperse the mist. However, it was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun's last scraps of consciousness let out an urgent shout.

**RUMBLE!**

Even as the world crumbled into bits, within the dispersing mist,

two red eyes... snapped open!

The life essence spirit had awakened!

\*\*

In the outside world, Bai Xiaochun's deep enlightenment went past forty days. It continued on and on. Fifty days. Sixty days. Seventy days. Eighty days. Ninety days.... One hundred days!

The number of days which had passed left the north bank disciples in complete terror.

“A hundred days! More than three months! Bai Xiaochun... is still in deep enlightenment!!”

“He's not gonna die, is he...?”

“This is shocking! I've never seen anything like this in my entire life!”

The Outer Sect disciples were terrified, and the Inner Sect disciples were shaken. Beihan Lie and the other Chosen felt as if their minds were being struck by lightning. But things weren't over. 101 days. 120 days. 130 days. It was at that point, sometime in the afternoon, that Bai Xiaochun began to tremble.

People immediately noticed. They rubbed their eyes, looked

again, and when it was certain that Bai Xiaochun was shaking, people began to cry out in surprise.

It was in that very moment that... Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes!

# Chapter 129: Bone Spur!

---

A blank look could still be seen in Bai Xiaochun's eyes. Although his consciousness had returned, he still hadn't completely recovered from the experience of being in the illusory world of deep enlightenment. The real world around him almost didn't seem real at first.

Soon the disciples from the Hall of Justice noticed what was happening, and looked over at him. As for the Outer Sect disciples in the audience, their eyes went wide, and they began to cry out in shock.

“130 days!”

“He took five times as long as Eldest Brother Ghostfang to enter deep enlightenment, and spent five times as long inside!”

The clamoring Outer Sect disciples quickly produced jade slips to send word to their friends that Bai Xiaochun had awakened. Soon, a tempest raged in the north bank as countless disciples got the messages and began to race over to the trial platform.

As he sat there beneath the trial platform statue, his eyes blank, he slowly lifted his right hand and then pushed it out in front of him.

“Waterswamp...” he whispered.

Few people could hear him, but as soon as the word left his mouth, massive rumbling sounds echoed out that could shake heaven and earth. They were like peals of heavenly thunder crashing in everyone's ears.

BOOOOOM! BOOOOOM! BOOOOOM!

Three massive crashing sounds shocked everyone to the core. At the same time, a boundless field of water vapor spread out in all directions.

9 meters. 30 meters. 150 meters. 300 meters.... All the way to 600 meters!

Bai Xiaochun was surrounded by a boundless field of water vapor 600 meters wide. The water vapor instantly reduced visibility, making it difficult to see anything clearly. Furthermore, all of the disciples within the vapor suddenly gasped as a powerful force suddenly pushed against them.

The pushing force was so powerful that none of the disciples could fight against it. In the blink of an eye, they were pushed away until not a single person remained within 300 meters of Bai Xiaochun.

The haze created by the water vapor rose up high into the sky, even altering the energy of heaven and earth in the area. A huge vortex began to spin, completely shaking all the observing disciples, who couldn't help but think about the clawed ghost hand which appeared when Ghostfang unleashed Ghosts Haunt the

Night.

That was a secret magic that didn't seem possible for Qi Condensation disciples to unleash, and left the north bank disciples not only with a feeling of deep respect for Ghostfang, but also, fear. Furthermore... they were experiencing exactly the same thing with Bai Xiaochun right now!

Gasps could be heard as more and more disciples rushed over to the scene. Many of them were Inner Sect disciples, including Beihan Lie, the Gongsun siblings, and Xu Song.

As soon as they saw the vortex, and Bai Xiaochun, their faces flickered with astonishment.

“Waterswamp Kingdom!”

“He must have succeeded in cultivating it! But what kind of life essence spirit did he get...?”

Ghostfang hovered there, staring down at Bai Xiaochun. The desire to fight sprang up in his eyes, but he quickly suppressed it.

As the disciples watched, trembling, the four peak lords of the north bank arrived, as well as Li Qinghou.

“I really look forward to seeing Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit!”

“He’s only unleashed the waterswamp, and yet the energy is astounding. I wonder what’s inside....”

Li Qinghou’s eyes shone with delight; he keenly anticipated what would result now that Bai Xiaochun had awoken from deep enlightenment.

As everyone looked on, Bai Xiaochun slowly lifted his head. His eyes were still blank as he suddenly... lowered his right hand!

“.... Kingdom!” he murmured.

In that very instant, a series of gasps rang out among the audience as an indescribable aura erupted out from within Bai Xiaochun to fill the entire area.

Within that 600-meter-area, everything was hazy, making it difficult to see anything clearly. But now... the dense water vapor transformed into... a swamp!

The roar of a beast could be heard from within the waterswamp, bizarre and seemingly filled with the voices of countless other beasts.

ROAR!!

The sky trembled and the ground shook. Everyone who heard the

sound, regardless of the level of their cultivation base, was left shaken. At the same time, varying levels of pressure began to push down on everyone.

As the roar echoed out, the battle beasts belonging to the various disciples of the north bank all reacted by throwing their heads back and howling aggressively. All of them were instantly thrown into chaos.

In the Beast Conservatory, the nearly one thousand beasts all began to howl. It didn't take long before all of the beasts on the north bank had joined together, sending deafening howls out in all directions. The north bank disciples were trembling.

“Just what kind of life essence spirit does Bai Xiaochun have in his Waterswamp Kingdom!?!?”

“Heavens, how is he doing this!?” The disciples, faces flashing with shock, struggled to keep their battle beasts under control. That was especially true of the Inner Sect disciples, whose battle beasts were of a different blood order, making their reactions even stronger and more violent, to the point where they seemed crazed.

The crowd struggled with their beasts, and the sound of roaring filled the air.

The 600-meter-wide waterswamp twisted and distorted, as if it were being projected from some outside world. Furthermore, there seemed to be some unseen beast struggling to break through a barrier from another world to burst out into this one.



Suddenly, the waterswamp shook violently, and a huge mountain peak rose up from the very middle of it!

It was enormous, but upon closer inspection, it seemed obvious that... because the waterswamp was only 600 meters across, this was only the very tip of the mountain!!

But then, further examination revealed a spine-tingling truth. It wasn't a mountain peak, it was... the tip of a bone spur!!

“A bone spur! Heavens! That's the tip of a bone spur!”

“The tip of that bone spur is 600 meters wide. How big is the beast itself? This life essence spirit... what exactly does it look like?!”

Energy that could shake heaven and earth exploded from the Waterswamp Kingdom. As the blast spread out in all directions, the battle beasts went completely out of control. Howling at the tops of their lungs, they began to throw themselves down to the ground in prostration!

“Impossible!!”

“How could this be happening?!?!” The disciples were completely shocked as, one after another, each and every battle beast on the north bank dropped down in worship. At the same time, threatening howls began to emanate from the four mountain peaks

of the north bank.

The seven-colored phoenix shot out into the air, where it stared vigilantly at the mountain peak rising from Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom. A moment later, the phoenix was joined by the black, three-eyed raven.

Simultaneously, the huge lizard appeared and let out a powerful roar in the direction of the mountain peak.

The Ghostfang Peak mountain ghost also appeared, clutching its bone trident, surrounded by black mist. Although it seemed nervous, if you looked closely, it and the other of the four spirit beast guardians all had gleams of respect deep in their eyes.

Meanwhile, in the depths of the Beast Conservatory, down in the Ancient Beast Chasm, two eyes suddenly opened. They were huge, and shone with a piercing light that seemed to reach all the way through the stone walls to gaze upon Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom.

Those eyes belonged to none other than the sect's holy beast guardian, the Heavenhorn ink dragon!

Even it looked with profound solemnity at Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit.

The entire north bank was completely and utterly shaken. The elders of the four mountain peaks were astonished as they emerged

to watch the scene play out. Atop Mount Daoseed, several profoundly powerful gazes also turned to look at Bai Xiaochun.

The four peak lords were panting, their scalps tingling in shock.

“Just what type of life essence spirit is that!?”

“This is unheard-of!!”

“That type of power can’t be controlled by a Qi Condensation cultivator. This is similar to Ghostfang! No, wait, it exceeds Ghostfang!”

Under the shocked gazes of all present, the Waterswamp Kingdom mountain peak slowly sank back down. The 600-meter-wide Waterswamp Kingdom was too small, making it impossible for Bai Xiaochun’s life essence spirit to appear in full. As it sank down, the waterswamp around it gradually faded away.

Bai Xiaochun sat there cross-legged, his face pale, his eyes wide. He was now fully awake; even he seemed to be astonished at the bone spur which had emerged from the Waterswamp Kingdom.

As the Waterswamp Kingdom vanished, the surrounding battle beasts gradually calmed down. However, their masters, the disciples of the north bank, were left with minds spinning. After a moment of protracted silence, everyone burst into a pandemonium.

“Was I... was I just seeing things...?”

“That was the Waterswamp Kingdom?!?!”

“Bai Xiaochun’s life essence spirit only revealed the tip of a single bone spur...?”

“That energy just now could shake heaven and earth! Did that really come from... a Qi Condensation disciple like me? Ai. It’s too bad he’s not a north peak disciple.”

Amidst the hubbub, the four peak lords exchanged glances, and then looked over at the equally shocked Li Qinghou.

“The younger generation will surpass us in time.... I really am dying to find out what that life essence spirit looks like.”

“You can only imagine what it will be like to see Bai Xiaochun fully unleash the power of the Waterswamp Kingdom!”

“His cultivation base is insufficient, and the waterswamp was only 600 meters wide, so his life essence spirit only revealed the tip of a single bone spur. If he’s ever able to reach the Gold Core stage... and unleash a 500-kilometer Waterswamp Kingdom, I can only guess what his life essence spirit will be like when it appears.”

“If he eventually uses the that Waterswamp Kingdom against people at the same level as himself... one can only imagine how powerful he’ll be!”

Li Qinghou felt very proud of Bai Xiaochun, although he didn't show it. Keeping his excitement and happiness to himself, he turned and left the north bank. After all, he had his own preparations to make. He needed to attempt to break through into the Gold Core stage within ten years.

# Chapter 130: The Blooming Of The Beastbirth Flower

---

Even Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure exactly what his life essence spirit looked like. He could also tell that his cultivation base was insufficient at the moment. 600 meters wasn't enough to accommodate the entirety of the life essence spirit.

He didn't mind, though. The fact that his life essence spirit appeared at all indicated that his years of cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom had not been wasted. Furthermore, he was now filled with anticipation about what exactly the life essence spirit would be like in the end.

Hearing the hubbub of voices around him, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, feeling very pleased with himself.

“Ai. What a headache! No matter where I go, people are always cheering. I actually prefer to keep a low profile. Ah well. I guess I can just forget about how much the north bank disciples bullied me in the past.” Just as he was about to rise to his feet, a wave of vertigo swept over him, and intense pangs of hunger stabbed through him. At that point he realized that he was so weak he couldn't even stand.

He immediately pulled out a medicinal pill. After consuming it, he felt a bit better, and managed to rise to his feet.

The north bank disciples looked on with mixed emotions. Despite being so weak, Bai Xiaochun didn't forget to make himself look like

a melancholy hero. His ashen complexion added to the effect as he slowly made his way off.

After he was some distance off, the north bank disciples began to sigh. It was hard for them to decide how they felt about Bai Xiaochun. At first he had been their archenemy, and then he had fought them on the trial platform, one disciple after another, for an entire month. After that, he had surpassed Ghostfang in deep enlightenment, and then showed off a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering Waterswamp Kingdom.

All of them had to admit that Bai Xiaochun was truly a Chosen. Furthermore, he was different from the other Chosen. He was the kind of person who always looked like he deserved a beating, which was something that had nothing to do with his strength. It was something innate about him.

Ever since he had arrived on the north bank, things never let up. One development after another occurred, all revolving around him. It left the crowd sighing in their hearts.

The Inner Sect disciples were even more moved than the others. From the fact that Bai Xiaochun took twice as long to enter deep enlightenment, it was clear to them that his understanding of enlightenment couldn't compare to Ghostfang's.

In fact, he might not even measure up to some of the other Chosen in that regard. However, he spent seventy maddened days in observation, something that clearly displayed his level of focus, and how much preparation and hard work he could put into enlightenment.

Beihan Lie had nothing to say as he watched Bai Xiaochun disappearing off into the distance. He turned and went back to his immortal's cave, where he went into secluded meditation, determined to break through to the tenth level of Qi Condensation, and after that, prepare for Foundation Establishment.

“I need to improve in terms of focus and hard work,” he thought. “Bai Xiaochun, one of these days, I’m definitely going to surpass you!”

The Gongsun siblings, Xu Song, and the other Inner Sect Chosen all took deep breaths as they contemplated how much more powerful Bai Xiaochun was. Even still, they were not willing to be constantly battered by such pressure. Filled with determination, they made similar decisions as Beihan Lie.

“Inadequacies can be remedied by diligence. If Bai Xiaochun can do something like that, then so can I!” That was what each and every one of them was thinking.

Soon, the crowds had dispersed. Ghostfang watched Bai Xiaochun leave, still wondering what Bai Xiaochun had seen after the beast’s clawed hand.

Hearing an explanation would do no good. He needed to see with his own eyes. That would be the only way to achieve a breakthrough with his Ghosts Haunt the Night.

“What if I entered his memories? Then I could see what I wished



to see.” After some deep thought about the matter, he shook his head. “I can’t be completely confident in succeeding, not right now. But after I reach Foundation Establishment....” His eyes began to shine with a profound light.

“Now that I think about, the appointed time Master talked about is approaching. The three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands controlled by the great sects of the eastern Lower Reaches of the Heavenspan River will be opened. One of them is the Fallen Sword Abyss.... Once inside, when the Tideflow of the earthstring Foundation Establishment begins, my secret magic should enable me to achieve an eight Tideflows Foundation Establishment. At that time, things will be much simpler.” Nodding his head, Ghostfang turned and headed off.

Bai Xiaochun strutted like a hero all the way back to the Beast Conservatory. Once inside, he looked around and found himself alone, whereupon he slumped down and trudged back into the honor guard station, where he immediately fell asleep.

He slept for three days straight before finally waking up. Even then, he was only partially recovered. A half month passed before he returned to his previous peak. When that happened, he was delighted to discover that his cultivation base had made some progress. He was now at the very limit of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, and would only need about half a month of meditation, as well as some medicinal pills, to break into the tenth level.

In addition to that, he found that his ability to control spiritual power had changed. He was now more flexible in his control, and

could manipulate it without the slightest lag in speed.

What left him even more ecstatic was that his qi passageways were thicker than before. Plus, his Undying Silver Skin had even more golden light in it than it had months before.

“I’ve made progress in every aspect!” he thought, excited. First he took a trip around the jungle to visit all the beasts he hadn’t seen during the past months. Then he went to the garden in the back courtyard, where the six-meter-tall plant which had sprouted up out of the Beastbirth Seed now sported an enormous flower bud at the top.

The Beastbirth Seed had been growing for quite some time, and within spirit soil with a threefold spirit enhancement at that. Bai Xiaochun had also taken time to sprinkle some special spirit fertilizer onto the soil every once in awhile to help it grow.

Because of the spell formation he’d put in place, nobody had ever noticed its existence.

After looking at it closely, he was delighted to discover that the flower bud was almost completely mature.

“I bet it will only be a month or so before it’s ready!” Laughing heartily, he sat down in place to begin some breathing exercises and cultivation, simultaneously watching over the Beastbirth Flower bud.

Ten days flew by. Bai Xiaochun's imminent breakthrough, and the Beastbirth Flower, had him all smiles. During the time that passed, the Beastbirth Flower's stalk didn't grow any taller, but the flower bud grew larger and larger, until it was almost two meters tall.

It was so heavy that the entire thing began to bend over. The multiple layers making up the flower bud were so numerous that it was only possible to imagine what it would look like when it opened up.

There was also a fragrant aroma which spread out from it.

Bai Xiaochun was very excited. He sat there meditating for three more days. Around evening, cracking sounds could be heard, and black filth oozed from his pores. At the same time, the spiritual power inside of him surged like thousands of galloping horses.

The power grew more intense, eventually coalescing into something like a huge raging river that resembled a roaring dragon.

Bai Xiaochun shook visibly as the image of a dragon and a mammoth appeared behind him. His eyes snapped open, and they flashed like lightning. Shocking, thunderous rumbling filled him, sounds that only he could hear.

“Second level of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture!

“Tenth level of Qi Condensation!”

He took a deep breath as he probed the spiritual power inside of him, which was more than double the amount of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Rising to his feet, he performed an incantation gesture, summoning a violet cauldron.

Excited, he waved his finger, causing another violet cauldron to appear next to the first one. After that, he summoned another. Three cauldrons were now circling around him. Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Flashing into motion, he waved the Golden Crow Sword, causing a raging nine-meter-wide inferno of fire to spring up around him.

There was also a fiery golden crow, a creature birthed from flame, which caused incredible pressure to spread out.

Bai Xiaochun’s smile grew wider. Waving his hand, he retracted all of the magic, and then took a deep breath. By this point, he truly felt himself to be a heroic master.

“Foundation Establishment.... It’s so close. Once I get to the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation, I’ll be able to give it a shot!” As soon as Bai Xiaochun thought about the additional longevity he would gain upon reaching Foundation Establishment, he got more excited.

After cleaning himself up, he used half a day to get used to the changes in his cultivation base, and his increased amount of spiritual power. With that work done, he returned to the rear

courtyard, where he sat down cross-legged in front of the Beastbirth Flower.

“My cultivation base has broken through. Now I’m just waiting for this flower.

“Hahaha! My dreams are truly about to become a reality!

“My life essence spirit might be illusory, and born from a secret magic, but this Beastbirth Flower is different. This will be a true battle beast belonging to me!

“I’m going to raise... a battle beast that has the best parts of all of the other battle beasts. When that happens, my purpose in coming to the north bank will have been accomplished!” Bai Xiaochun had been waiting for a long time for this day, and now all he could do was wait and stand guard.

More than ten days went by in a flash. Bai Xiaochun’s eyes gradually widened as the stalk of the plant gradually vanished, to be replaced by nothing more than a gigantic Beastbirth Flower. Although he had known from his research that this would happen, it was still a shocking thing to see with his own eyes.

The flower and the stalk had begun the merging process seven days before, but already, it was over 18 meters tall, like a gigantic steamed bun....

Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard and backed up a few paces to stand

guard. Three days later, a fragrant aroma spread out from the enormous, 27-meter-tall “[bun](#)” sitting there in front of him.

At the very top of the “bun,” a small, mouth-like opening could be seen, which was where the fragrant aroma came from.

“When the spirit aroma grows strong, the Beastbirth Flower will bloom, and the beast will be born. That’s what the information said!” Bai Xiaochun began to walk slowly around the Beastbirth Flower, his eyes shining. After some more thought, he left, then came back followed by a flying tiger.

The flying tiger looked around curiously as it entered the rear courtyard, but then a tremor suddenly ran through it, and its eyes began to shine as brightly as if it had seen a female of its own species. With a powerful roar, it suddenly launched itself toward the Beastbirth Flower.

As it closed in, the Beastbirth Flower opened its mouth-like aperture and, in the blink of an eye, swallowed up the flying tiger.

The scene playing out caused Bai Xiaochun’s eyes to widen. Hurrying forward, he realized that although he couldn’t actually see the flying tiger, he could tell that it was moving inside of the flower. When he was sure about that, he calmed down a bit and moved off to the side to wait.

After about two hours passed, the flower slowly opened up, and the flying tiger crawled out. It was trembling, and almost seemed drunk with pleasure. Although it seemed to want more, Bai

Xiaochun grabbed it and took it back out into the Beast Conservatory.

When he returned, he was followed by a huge bear. Moments later, the bear saw the flower, roared, and lunged forward....

# Chapter 131: For The Contributions!

---

Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back as he stood there in the courtyard watching the intoxicated bear trundling off into the distance. It looked back three times, seemingly reluctant to leave. Bai Xiaochun sighed, musing about the goodness of his deeds.

During the following half month, he continued to go out into the Beast Conservatory and return with specially selected beasts. The Beastbirth Flower would swallow them up, and when they emerged, they looked drunk with pleasure, and would make their way off into the distance on unsteady legs.

Bai Xiaochun kept his selection very limited, choosing only from two hundred of the most special beasts.

He wanted the flower to give birth to the ultimate battle beast, and therefore, he selected either the strongest or the largest of the beasts in the jungle.

Eventually, all of the beasts which had offered contributions began to gather outside of the spell formation. Whenever Bai Xiaochun appeared, they would howl at the tops of their lungs, as if to ask for another chance.

“Absolutely not,” Bai Xiaochun replied firmly. “One contribution is enough. I don’t want to harm you!” Eventually, Bai Xiaochun brought the huge pangolin over to contribute, and that was when he realized he’d run out of good beasts to chose from.



Furthermore, he was well aware that the blooming period of the Beastbirth Flower didn't last for very long. Eventually, it would give birth to whatever was inside, no matter what it was. That was when he started to get nervous.

"This won't do. These beasts aren't enough to create the ultimate battle beast." Having reached this point in his train of thoughts, Bai Xiaochun left the Beast Conservatory to take a walk through the north bank. After observing all of the animals, he had come to be quite familiar with the disciples' battle beasts. He even knew which ones had the greatest potential for future growth, and which ones were the strongest.

"I remember one female Outer Sect disciple who had a peacock. It had great potential. That peacock should do nicely, shouldn't it?" He quickly hurried over to the residence of that very female disciple.

After waiting outside for a while, the young woman approached. She was quite well-known in the Outer Sect, and was very beautiful. As soon as she neared, Bai Xiaochun put a warm smile onto his face, and tactfully offered some merit points if she would allow her peacock to make an important contribution. Although he didn't mention the Beastbirth Flower itself, he did explain other matters in detail.

Worried that she would reject the offer, he decided to add in one more bit of explanation.

“Don’t worry. The contribution itself won’t hurt the beast. You know, afterward, all of the beasts who’ve done it have looked drunk with pleasure. They all want a second round, as a matter of fact, but I was worried it would harm their vital energy, so I refused.”

The female disciple’s expression slowly went blank. Although she wasn’t exactly sure what he meant by “contribution,” after hearing his further explanation, her eyes went wide with fear.

“You... you pervert!” she huffed. A bit tongue-tied, she stamped her foot and walked off.

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped, and he felt a bit wronged.

“I just wanted to borrow your peacock! If you don’t agree, that’s fine, but there’s no need to start cursing me. Bai Xiaochun is no pervert!” Feeling a bit down, he went to the next person on his list. During the following days, he visited over a hundred disciples, and yet, not a single one agreed. In fact, many of them looked at him with very odd expressions.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and decided that since everyone was refusing, he might as well forget the idea. Having no other option, he would have to settle for second best and try out some of the other beasts in the Beast Conservatory.

However, just when he was about to give up, something like a wind blew through the sect. Numerous disciples looked over at Bai Xiaochun with strange expressions on their faces, and began to

whisper amongst themselves.

“Did you hear? Bai Xiaochun has a very unique hobby....”

“For the past few days, he’s been going around asking to borrow battle beasts from people. He talks about some sort of contribution, and if you don’t know what that means, well, come here, I’ll explain it!”

“Oh, so that’s what it means! Heavens! I can’t believe that Bai Xiaochun uses the beasts for.... Heavens! Is it really true?”

The rumors began to fly completely spontaneously. Apparently, after the north bank disciples realized they couldn’t do anything about Bai Xiaochun, their malice toward him had gradually transformed into intrigue. As such, it only took a few days for everyone to have caught wind of the rumors.

“Do you know why Bai Xiaochun came to the north bank? It’s the beasts! He has a special sort of love for them!”

“Now I get it! No wonder he made that Aphrodisiac Pill. It all makes sense now. He needed it for himself to begin with....”

“Chosen always have their eccentric hobbies. I’m just curious as to whether he prefers female beasts or male beasts?”

“Heavens! I can’t believe you’re wondering about something like that! Shh... keep your voice down. Look, I think I know the answer

to your question....”

When Bai Xiaochun heard the rumors, he was dumbstruck. The most extreme thing to happen was one evening at dusk when he happened to catch sight of a female disciple with a blue-eyed black cat. A bit curious, he looked over, whereupon the female disciple screamed at the top of her lungs and ran off at top speed.

Bai Xiaochun almost couldn't believe it all, and felt very wronged. He tried to explain things to people, and although they seemed to understand, the rumors only raged hotter.

“What a bunch of bullies!” he fumed. “It wasn't easy for me, Bai Xiaochun, to come to the north bank, completely impoverished. I minded my own business and tried not to offend anyone. I walked around with my tail between my legs, and yet, you people push things this far!? Slanderers!”

Eyes bloodshot, he gnashed his teeth.

“You're going overboard, people! If all you're going to do is slander me, then I'll go get the beasts myself!” Even as he burned with rage, he suddenly felt a wind blowing against his back. Looking over his shoulder, he didn't see anyone, but did notice a tree off to the side which was swaying back and forth.

Next, a black blur sped toward him, openings its mouth to bite at his belly... the ferocious jaws instantly began to snap shut with terrifying power.

Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun was in the tenth level of Qi Condensation. Furthermore, after awakening from his deep enlightenment, his senses had become heightened. As such, he recognized what was happening and quickly fell back.

Even as he did, a mouthful of razor-sharp teeth smashed onto the air a little more than a meter in front of him. The power of the bite was such that even the sound of it was shocking. It seemed to be filled with hatred.

The black blur was none other than the Nightstalker Beast, the huge black dog. It was currently nighttime, which meant that it was much faster than it was during the day. Seeing that its second attempt to ambush Bai Xiaochun had failed, the dog quickly turned to flee.

“You again!!” Bai Xiaochun said, scalp numb, sweat dripping down his neck. He felt chills running up his spine; if he had been even a bit slower to react, then the dog would surely have bitten him.

When he thought of what might have resulted, he shivered. He couldn’t bet his life on his Undying Live Forever Technique....

“Damned black dog! It almost put an end to an entire Prestige clan!!” He glared in fury as the dog ran off into the distance.

“Intolerable bullying!” he raged. “If the north bank disciples want to bully me, that’s one matter, but now a big dog is trying to do the same thing?! Last time I felt sorry for you, but this time,

you're not getting off the hook!" With that, wings sprouted from his back, and he flickered into motion.

One man, one dog, they raced through the north bank at incredible speed.

The dog was also very fast, and was very familiar with the area. Bai Xiaochun chased after it for almost an hour, until the sky was completely dark. He never was able to catch up, and yet his fury was not abated. The fact that he had been ambushed, and then completely left in the dust by the perpetrator, made him more angry than ever.

As of this moment, the big black dog occupied the number two slot on Bai Xiaochun's list of hatreds. The number three spot was held by Elder Zhou's phoenix, and the number one spot... belonged to the abnormally stealthy talking rabbit. Nothing could ever take that first place spot away from the rabbit.

"I'll chase you to the ends of the earth if I have to!" Silver light flickered around him as the Undying Live Forever Technique was unleashed to its maximum effect, and his wings fluttered with protomagnetic power. In that moment, his speed instantly doubled.

He transformed into a series of afterimages that quickly closed in toward the dog. In that moment, the dog silently attempted to duck into a cave, but before it could, Bai Xiaochun was there, reaching out toward it.

As the hand neared, the black dog's eyes turned crimson, and it madly turned its head. Unexpectedly, it was completely disregarding its own safety to lunge toward Bai Xiaochun's belly and take out a bite.

The dog had failed in its ambush before, so there was no need to even wonder if it could succeed when Bai Xiaochun was enraged and chasing after it. Before the dog's jaws could even bite down, a gurgling sound could be heard as Bai Xiaochun's hand clamped down onto its throat.

His hand was like an iron vice that completely prevented the black dog from escaping.

"Hmph! Now we're going to see how awesome you are!" Gritting his teeth, he headed back to the Beast Conservatory, and soon arrived at the honor guard station. After thinking for a moment about how to punish the dog, he suddenly looked over at the Beastbirth Flower.

His heart twitched, and he chuckled darkly. With that, he tossed the dog toward the Beastbirth Flower, which swallowed it up in an instant.

Two hours later, the flower opened, and the big black dog crawled out. Although its eyes shone with hatred and madness, there was something else in them as well. Before another moment could pass, it lunged at Bai Xiaochun, who grabbed it and threw it back into the flower.

Another two hours passed, and the dog appeared again, just as maddened as before. Bai Xiaochun threw it back into the flower.

After four times, the dog emerged, legs wobbly. It flopped onto the ground, panting.

“Scared now?” Bai Xiaochun said, snorting coldly. “Provoke me again, and I’ll–”

Before he could even finish, the black dog looked up at him and tried its best to reach out and bite him. Enraged, Bai Xiaochun grabbed the dog and threw it back into the Beastbirth Flower for another go. After five more times, it made a total of nine.

After nine times, the dog was gaunt and listless. Seeing that, Bai Xiaochun picked it up, and it let out a miserable howl. Bai Xiaochun felt bad.

“Now do you understand what you have to be afraid of? Just don’t provoke me any more. I had no choice but to do what I did in the Chosen battles.” With this admonishment, he tossed the big black dog out of the honor guard station. The dog used what little energy it had left to flee off into the distance. When it got far enough, though, it turned to look back, and seemed like it was savoring sweet memories....



# Chapter 132: Life Essence Ancestral Awakening Blood

---

Bai Xiaochun watched the dog disappearing off into the distance, a thoughtful expression on his face. The way it had slowly grown more thin and gaunt was very telling, and gave him a much better understanding of the Beastbirth Flower's growing process. He suddenly thought of the fragrant aroma the flower exuded.

“The Beastbirth Flower exudes a sort of hallucinogenic aura. Once other animals get caught up in it, their qi and blood are stirred, and some of their life essence ancestral blood is extracted by the flower. That's why the dog gradually grew thinner.... Wild beasts are slightly different, so when their qi and blood is stimulated, the illusions they experience are also different. Either way, the point of the hallucination is to stop them from resisting.

“No wonder this Beastbirth Seed is virtually extinct.... In some ways, it's completely superior to all wild beasts!” Bai Xiaochun trembled at this new realization.

When mosquitos suck blood, they numb the vicinity of the bite so that they can feast surreptitiously. Likewise, when the Beastbirth Flower absorbed the life essence ancestral awakening blood, it was done in secret.

Seven days passed. Considering how soon the Beastbirth Flower would be blooming, Bai Xiaochun felt that if he couldn't get any more superior beasts' life essence ancestral awakening blood, it would be a huge waste of the flower.

Then he thought about how the north bank disciples had been slandering him, and he ground his teeth. At that point, he slipped out of the Beast Conservatory into the dark and windswept night.

“I haven’t done something like this for a while. It’s a bit of a loss of face considering my status... but I don’t have any other choice.” Eyes shining brightly, he drifted undetected through the north bank until he arrived outside of a certain residence. Inside was a beautiful peacock, currently asleep and completely oblivious to any dangers. Suddenly, a hand snaked out and clasped it by the neck.

The peacock struggled as a powerful force dragged it through the night, but it couldn’t make even a single sound. Complete unable to free itself, it was quickly taken away by Bai Xiaochun.

Glancing around vigilantly to ensure that no one was watching him, he quickly made his way to another location. It didn’t take long before he had green python in hand as well as a peacock. And yet, things weren’t over.

Over the course of the next hour, Bai Xiaochun toiled away. When he returned to the Beast Conservatory, he had a peacock in his left hand, a night leopard in his right, a white monkey pinned against his side, and a green python wrapped around him.

“What a goldmine!” he thought excitedly. With that, he hurried back to the rear courtyard and bound up the battle beasts. Then he tossed the peacock into the Beastbirth Flower.

After the peacock was swallowed up by the flower, Bai Xiaochun waited in excitement off to the side. Before long, the peacock was spat out, and although it didn't look drunk with pleasure, it seemed to be relishing some wonderful memory. Apparently, the illusion it had experienced was different from the other animals. Before it could recover, Bai Xiaochun grabbed it and then threw the green python into the flower. Then he hurried away with the peacock to return it to where he'd acquired it from.

The peacock didn't cry out or struggle. In fact, when Bai Xiaochun turned to leave, it even gazed at him fawningly, almost with anticipation, as if it hoped he would take it away again.

Sounding very serious, Bai Xiaochun said, "Having a bit of your life essence ancestral awakening blood extracted won't hurt you. But too much won't be good. Be a good little peacock, alright? Oh... don't tell your master about me, okay?" With that, he left.

Bai Xiaochun worked hard that night. After returning the green python, he had the white monkey and the night leopard to deal with. The entire affair left him quite exhausted. However, when he thought about how content the animals looked, and how they clearly didn't wish to leave the flower behind, he knew that he was doing a good thing.

Most importantly of all, the Beastbirth Flower was looking stronger and more healthy than ever.

"One simple act pleases the battle beasts, pleases the Beastbirth Flower, and pleases me! It only goes to show what a good deed I'm performing!" Overall, he was very happy. The following night

when the moon began to rise, he strode out of the Beast Conservatory, chin stuck up, hair blowing in the wind.

For the following several days, he went about the same routine. He picked the best battle beasts, regardless of whether they belonged to Outer or Inner Sect disciples. At the most, he chose four per night. Any more, and he wouldn't be able to return them before dawn.

Because of his stealth, and the profundity of his cultivation base, not a single problem arose. The only difference was that the battle beasts which had provided contributions during the night would act very differently if they encountered Bai Xiaochun during the day. They would leap about excitedly as if they wished to please him.

The masters of the various beasts were shocked; in the past, their battle beasts had never liked Bai Xiaochun very much, but now they fawned all over him. Even more strange was that not a single battle beast provided any sort of explanation, not even when asked to do so.

Half a month passed, and it was with great pride that Bai Xiaochun looked at the continuously maturing Beastbirth Flower. Thanks to all of the constant additions of life essence ancestral awakening blood from the most powerful of the battle beasts, his nighttime efforts were all worth it.

On this particular night, thick clouds covered the moon, casting everything into pitch darkness. Bai Xiaochun had a hedgehog in one hand and a fierce bull slung over his shoulder, both of them

trussed up to keep them quiet as he approached another residence.

“Black, blue-eyed cat....” he murmured, his eyes shining with a strange light. He had never forgotten this particular battle beast. Just as he was about to take action, two pairs of blue eyes snapped open within the courtyard up ahead, and the low-pitched yowl of a cat echoed out into the silence of night.

“So alert!” he thought, shocked. The yowl of the cat roused quite a few nearby disciples, so Bai Xiaochun quickly retreated. However, even as he did, the black, blue-eyed cat shot out to block his path.

Shockingly, human-level intelligence gleamed in its eyes, as well as something like a sneer.

Bai Xiaochun was instantly infuriated. On any other occasion, he could have handled this black cat easily, but now his hands were full, making this more difficult. Suddenly, wings sprouted out behind him, and he vanished before anyone could emerge to see him.

Thanks to the powerful yowl of the cat, Bai Xiaochun had a very hard time making it back to the Beast Conservatory while avoiding the notice of the north bank disciples. When he finally arrived, he gritted his teeth and mentally cursed the black cat.

“How am I going to handle that cat? It’s simply too vigilant!” It was a real headache. Suddenly, Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered, and he lunged to the side, just as a black blur flashed

passed him, accompanied by the sound of clashing teeth.

“You again!!” Bai Xiaochun had been angry to begin with, but when he saw the big black dog, he got even angrier.

The dog had already ambushed him twice, and normally, it would flee as soon as it failed. This time, though, it came back for a second round, brimming with madness, ferocity, and especially, hatred.

Considering its agility and speed, if it tried to get away, Bai Xiaochun would normally have to use all the power he had, and also spend a significant amount of time, to be able to catch it. But it wasn't fleeing now, so Bai Xiaochun made short work of it.

“I'm short on beasts tonight!” Bai Xiaochun growled. “You're in!” Holding the struggling dog by the neck, he returned to the rear courtyard. The hedgehog and the fierce bull were the first to make contributions. The last was the fiercely struggling black dog.

After returning the bull and the hedgehog, Bai Xiaochun returned, bursting with rage. He had decided that the time had come to treat the black dog to an unforgettable lesson. He would make it offer contributions fifteen times in a row!

The black dog was gasping for breath by the time Bai Xiaochun tossed it out of the Beast Conservatory.

“If you dare to ambush me ever again,” Bai Xiaochun shouted,

“I’ll turn you into dog jerky!” The dog struggled to its feet and then slunk out into the jungle. When it finally reached a spot where Bai Xiaochun couldn’t see it, it flopped down onto the ground and stuck its tongue out to lick its lips. Unexpectedly, an intoxicated gleam appeared in its eyes.

Several more days passed, and Bai Xiaochun’s nighttime activities continued. However, the vigilant cat continued to be a big headache. Eventually, he prepared to attack it outright, but was shocked to find that the cat had hidden away in its master’s room.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t sure what to do, but wasn’t willing to give up. He continued to work on the other beasts as he pondered the situation. One night, when he was heading back to the Beast Conservatory with a huge toad, he suddenly stopped in place as a black blur shot past him, accompanied by a familiar sound.

It was the big black dog again, which was now standing there in front of him, trembling with eagerness, its teeth bared as if in preparation to attack.

At first, Bai Xiaochun was stunned by the dog’s persistence, but then he realized that there was something strange going on. During the dog’s third ambush, he hadn’t thought too much about the fact that it didn’t flee immediately. But now the dog was here again, and again, refrained from fleeing. Furthermore, the way it went about the ambush itself seemed a bit perfunctory. In addition to all that, its biting seemed far slower and far less ferocious than the previous occasions.

“Are you doing this on purpose?” he asked, shocked.

The dog had just been on the verge of lunging forward, but after hearing Bai Xiaochun’s question, it stopped in place and looked at him. It didn’t growl, it didn’t bare its teeth, it didn’t leap forward in attack. It just stood there staring at him.

A strange expression appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face. Ignoring the dog, he continued on his way. As he sped along, the dog followed, all the way back to the honor guard station.

As soon as it entered the rear courtyard, its tail began to wag furiously, and it... shot toward the Beastbirth Flower, completely of its own volition.

Bai Xiaochun stared in shock, and the expression on his face grew even more odd. After the dog finished its contribution and emerged from the flower, it didn’t leave, but rather, jumped right back in. It continued to do the same thing over and over again. By the following evening, it had offered a total of seven or eight contributions.

“That’s... that’s... so much life essence ancestral awakening blood! Are you trying to kill yourself? Dammit! Just what kind of fantasy are you experiencing in there?” In the end, he grabbed the crazed dog and threw it out the door. As the dog hobbled off, Bai Xiaochun prepared to start threatening it, but then his heart thumped as an idea occurred to him, and he changed tactics.

“I know you can understand me,” he said. “Listen up. If you want



back in here, stop ambushing me! Furthermore, bring me that black, blue-eyed cat, if you can. Then I'll let you make another contribution!"

The dog looked back for a moment before turning and running off into the distance.

A few days later, just when Bai Xiaochun was about to go out and procure some more beasts, he suddenly heard a familiar barking outside his door....

# Chapter 133: It's Not Worth Trying, Kiddo

---

Bai Xiaochun stuck his head out and saw that there outside of the spell formation shield was the big black dog. It stood there proudly, paw on the back of the vigilant black cat. The blue-eyed cat seemed very listless and in somewhat sore straits.

The black dog looked at Bai Xiaochun and then let out a proud howl. Bai Xiaochun immediately opened the spell formation, whereupon the dog charged in and leapt toward the Beastbirth Flower.

Bai Xiaochun was completely taken aback, and mused that whatever illusion the black dog experienced must be extraordinary.

“Is it really trying to kill itself?” he thought. With that he approached the blue-eyed cat. After a quick examination, he confirmed that it was only exhausted, and not injured in any way. Grabbing it, he walked back into the courtyard.

Sometime later.... After ten contributions to the Beastbirth Flower, Bai Xiaochun finally kicked the black dog out. He was actually starting to get worried that the dog's frequent contributions of life essence ancestral awakening blood might interfere with his plan to create the most powerful of all battle beasts. What would happen if the Beastbirth Flower ended up giving birth to... a big black dog?

The mere idea left him quite nervous, so he decided to accept no

further contributions from the black dog. Without any further hesitation, he tossed the blue-eyed cat into the Beastbirth Flower.

During the following half month, the black dog acted quite obediently. It would often come with a subdued battle beast, cry out until Bai Xiaochun opened the door, then wait eagerly to be allowed in.

Bai Xiaochun wanted to refuse, but every battle beast that the dog brought left him shocked.

“This dog is a god! All of these beasts are ones I had my eye on, but couldn’t get. Their masters either keep them in their bags of beast raising, or in their immortal’s caves.” Bai Xiaochun just couldn’t bring himself to refuse. The black dog had captured his heart, and every battle beast it brought left Bai Xiaochun shaken. In fact, one time it even managed to bring the battle beast of one of the Sunset Peak elders.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun realized the implications, and it left him with only a single question. “Dammit, how long was this black dog stalking me...?”

Sighing, he looked over at the dog lying quietly next to the Beastbirth Flower, and realized that it really was intelligent, powerful, and very fast. Were it not those things, it would have been impossible to get all of these battle beasts.

“Fine, fine. Poor guy. Considering how much I tired it out before, and how it always brings me these battle beasts, I guess letting it

contribute a few more times wouldn't hurt. I can't let things go too far, though. For its own good." With that, he shook his head and turned his attention to the four mountain peaks.

"I need some even more powerful battle beasts.... The spirit beast guardians of the four mountain peaks are probably the best choice." Licking his lips, he left the honor guard station and headed toward his cave by the Ancient Beast Chasm to concoct some pills.

By this point, many of the north bank disciples were starting to get suspicious. Many battle beasts were starting to behave very oddly, sometimes crying out in the middle of the night.

That was especially true of the black, blue-eyed cat, whose cries seemed especially loud. Sometimes, it appeared to be reminiscing about the past, dreaming of being the king of all beasts. It started to sound even more domineering when it yowled, to the point where people in the area couldn't sleep well. Its master was the most anxious of all, unsure of what exactly was happening with her own battle beast....

Such situations grew increasingly common throughout the sect....

Gradually, the north bank disciples began to run their own investigations into the matter....

A few days later, Bai Xiaochun emerged from his medicine concocting cave, loaded down with medicinal pills designed to

attract wild beasts. When night fell, he hurried out toward Irispetal Peak. After reaching the summit, he looked anxiously at the cave, and then, eager to find out if his idea would work, threw a tier-3 spirit medicine inside.

Almost as soon as the medicinal pill entered the cave, it shot back out at high speed, slamming into his chest with such force that, without his incredibly tough skin, it would have crushed him. His face fell as he staggered backward a few paces. At the same time, the seven-colored phoenix stretched its head out of the cave and looked at him with a derisive sneer.

Of course, it was sneering, not at Bai Xiaochun himself, but at his action of throwing the medicinal pill.

Apparently, it was telling him that it didn't consume medicinal pills given to it by strangers.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he coughed dryly.

Trying to look as charming as possible, he said, "Senior phoenix, that medicinal pill is really delicious.... If you don't like it, that's fine. But if you just come with me, I'll show you a place where all your dreams can come true." However, the phoenix merely flapped its wings, shoving Bai Xiaochun back so far he almost toppled off the nearby cliff. Heart pounding, he just managed to avoid falling.

The seven-colored phoenix glared at him threateningly, then slowly retreated back into its cave.

“Fine, fine. This seven-colored phoenix is too grouchy. I’ll head over to Sunset Peak to see the three-eyed raven. It has a much better temper.” Feeling a headache coming on, he made up his mind, and immediately headed over to Sunset Peak, where he attempted to use the same tactics at the three-eyed raven’s cave.

However, after enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Bai Xiaochun’s scalp tingled in fear as he took to flight. A black flash of light could be seen behind him as the three-eyed raven gave chase, driving him all the way down the mountain before proudly returning to its cave.

“I hate birds! Hmph! They have such bad tempers. And Elder Zhou’s bird even maligned me openly that one time!” He felt deeply wronged at how the birds had bullied him despite the fact that he had given them medicinal pills in good faith.

However, he couldn’t give up on his dream of raising the ultimate battle beast. Therefore, he turned his gaze toward Archway Peak.

“That big lizard seems pretty well-behaved. It’s pretty fat too, so that means it probably has a good appetite.... Maybe I’ll have a chance there.” Enlivened, he hurried over to Archway Peak. However, it didn’t take long before he returned, scowling. He even had some rips and tears in his garments.

The lizard had completely ignored him when he threw it some medicinal pills. After getting anxious, he’d tossed in a few more, whereupon the lizard slashed at him with its claws.

He was forced to flee in terror, uninjured, but his clothing destroyed, leaving him looking very dilapidated.

The final spirit beast guardian was the mountain ghost of Ghostfang Peak. Bai Xiaochun hesitated all the way until the following night. Finally, he stamped his foot angrily and hurried over to Ghostfang Peak. What he found was that the mountain ghost had the best temper of all. It ignored Bai Xiaochun as if he didn't even exist, and didn't pay the least bit of attention to the medicinal pills.

After waiting half the night without any response, he left. The next night, he came back, and even a third night, before he finally gave up, virtually on the verge of tears.

“All four spirit beast guardians hold me in complete contempt!” As he sat stewing in the honor guard station, the whole north bank was astir. The only exception were people who Bai Xiaochun was incapable of provoking, for example the people who kept their battle beasts inside their bags of beast raising. All the other valuable beasts had already made contributions. Even most of the elders' beasts had been brought over by the black dog.

However, Bai Xiaochun met with only failure when it came to the spirit beast guardians, leaving him scowling in grief. That was especially true considering that the Beastbirth Flower was on the verge of blooming.

“I want my battle beast to be unprecedentedly powerful, but the

four spirit beast guardians refuse to cooperate. I guess I need a battle beast even more powerful than them. What in the sect is more powerful than... wait a second.” Even as he murmured to himself about the subject, he suddenly shivered and looked toward the Ancient Beast Chasm, his eyes shining.

“The only thing more powerful than the spirit beast guardians... is the sect’s holy beast guardian!

“The Heavenhorn ink dragon.... If I could get that dragon to contribute, it would definitely be enough!!” Panting excitedly, he began to gather his thoughts.

“Now that I think about it, I’m on good terms with the holy beast guardian. I’ve been giving it medicinal pills ever since I got here.... Although I’ve never seen the old Heavenhorn ink dragon, it never stopped me from concocting medicine nearby. That means... it actually approves of me!” The more he thought about it, the more sense it made. Getting even more excited, he organized his bag of holding, took a deep breath, and flicked his sleeve, heading in the direction of the Ancient Beast Chasm.

He sped along in high spirits, ready to take a risk for his dream of raising the ultimate battle beast. Soon, he was standing at the edge of the waterfall which poured down into the Ancient Beast Chasm. Down below, it was impenetrably dark, with swirling black mists everywhere. As he stood at the edge, his arms and legs prickled with coldness that seemed to come from the depths of the chasm itself.

He shivered a bit. Fearful that he might fall, he backed up a few



steps, then gritted its teeth and threw a medicinal pill down inside.

“Senior Heavenhorn, it’s me, Bai Xiaochun of the Junior generation. Remember me? I’ve been giving you medicinal pills for years now. Well, um, why don’t you try this new flavor I came up with?” After waiting for a while and getting no response, he started wondering if perhaps the Heavenhorn ink dragon might like a different flavor. Finally, he threw in a different tier-3 spirit medicine.

It didn’t take long before he’d thrown seven or eight pills in. Starting to feel a bit dismayed, he finally threw in a bunch of Aphrodisiac Pills. However, there was no reaction.

“Perhaps the heavens have doomed Bai Xiaochun to fail in raising the ultimate battle beast....” Sighing dejectedly, he was about to turn and leave when, all of a sudden, the mist inside the cave churned, and a profoundly ancient voice spoke out from within.

“It’s not worth trying, kiddo.... I appreciate your kindness, but my fate was sealed three thousand years ago..... However, if you can find a way to get my life essence surging again, even for a moment, then I can do anything you want me to!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide. Panting, he turned back around and said, “Really?”

## Chapter 134: The Spirit Is Still There....

---

Within the swirling mists of the chasm, two eyes appeared that constantly flickered with different colors. The most frequent to appear was magenta.

Just those eyes were as large as Bai Xiaochun's entire body, leaving him panting at the thought of how large the entire Heavenhorn ink dragon was. When he looked closer, he could just barely make out a horn.

After looking closely at the horn for a moment, he was convinced that it really was the Heavenhorn ink dragon speaking, and he started to get excited. After a moment of thought, he gritted his teeth.

“Senior, fear not. I'll work very hard to do just that!” With that, Bai Xiaochun turned, his eyes shining with focus and hope. If he could simply get the Heavenhorn ink dragon to contribute a single time, then his hopes of raising the ultimate battle beast would surely be fulfilled.

“Life essence exhausted. Wants it to surge. That will require some serious stimulation. When it comes to stimulation... what could possibly compare to the effectiveness of my Aphrodisiac Pill!?” Eyes bloodshot, he flew out of the Beast Conservatory toward Mount Daoseed. Considering his status, and the vast amount of merit points he had saved up, he had no trouble procuring the medicinal plants he needed.

By the time he was finished, he had spent more than half of his merit points. He bought so many ingredients that he couldn't even fit them into one bag of holding. It took seven bags, all of them stuffed to the brim. The disciple in charge of selling medicinal plants stared in shock. In all the years he had been in charge, he had never seen anyone spend merit points in such shocking fashion.

Naturally, the disciple recognized him. After he left, that disciple took a deep breath and mused about how god-like Bai Xiaochun was.

After purchasing such a huge collection of medicinal plants, he returned to the vicinity of the Ancient Beast Chasm to begin concocting medicine. Soon his eyes were bloodshot, and he was in a state of frenzy.

"I have to concoct... a Super Aphrodisiac Pill!" he said through gritted teeth. Determined to drastically increase the medicinal efficacy, he adjusted the pill formula to raise the potency by hundreds if not thousands of times.

Seven days flew by. Bai Xiaochun didn't rest at all, and soon, his hair was in complete disarray. He was completely immersed in his concocting. Occasionally the black dog would come with battle beasts, whereupon Bai Xiaochun would impatiently give it a jade slip so that it could temporarily open the spell formation.

The dog was very intelligent, and would use the jade slip to take the battle beast back to the honor guard station and carefully carry out the mission assigned to it by Bai Xiaochun. Apparently it was

worried that if it didn't carry things out properly, it would have no more chances to return in the future. Of course, without Bai Xiaochun there to supervise it, the dog didn't exercise much control over how many times it contributed....

Over time, the north bank disciples gradually went mad. Each battle beast that went missing would return with a strange expression on its face, somehow prideful, as if it were the king of the world. It would act manic, murderous, intoxicated, and seemed to constantly be thinking about the past. Furthermore, no matter how the masters of such beasts tried to pry information out of them, it did no good.

More and more battle beasts exhibited such behavior. Some of the beasts had been strictly disciplined by their masters in the past, and would never have dreamed of acting out. But after disappearing and experiencing the illusory life of being the ruler of the world, they became uncontrollable.... The north bank was in chaos.

“What’s happening!?!?”

“There’s something fishy going on. We have to figure out what!!”

Eventually, even the battle beasts belonging to the elders began to act similarly. Before long, all of the disciples on the north bank were investigating the situation.

Three days later, Bai Xiaochun was completely immersed in his madness. It was with complete and utter fearlessness that he

hurried over to the edge of the chasm and asked for a drop of blood from the Heavenhorn ink dragon.

On any other occasion, Bai Xiaochun would never have done anything so dangerous, but considering the bedeviled state he was in, he completely suppressed any urge to consider the potential consequences.

After a long moment of silence from within the chasm, Bai Xiaochun impatiently said that he didn't have time to waste. A moment later, a golden drop of blood flew out, which Bai Xiaochun quickly put into a bottle. Then, he hurried back into his cave to continue his concocting work.

Five days later, he had been at work for half a month, with no rest. It was at that point that the Super Aphrodisiac Pill finally appeared in the world.

That evening, rumbling sounds echoed out as Bai Xiaochun stared at the head-sized medicinal pill, then threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Not only was the pill physically large, it was extremely heavy.

As soon as it appeared in the pill furnace, a strong medicinal aroma spread out in all directions. As the aroma wafted out from the cave, the black dog, which had been carrying along a battle beast, suddenly got a whiff. A tremor ran through it, and its eyes turned bright red. Howling, it ran out of the Beast Conservatory to parts unknown....

At the same time, countless excited howls could be heard throughout the jungle of the Beast Conservatory.

Seeing how effective the pill was already, Bai Xiaochun began to laugh even more loudly. He was trembling with excitement, but was still worried that the pill wasn't good enough.

Hurrying off to a location where he could be certain of his privacy, he produced his wok and began to perform a spirit enhancement. After the threefold spirit enhancement was completed, his Super Aphrodisiac Pill had reached a level that was virtually unheard-of in the cultivation world. A superior-grade pill!

“This pill will definitely work. If it doesn't, then Bai Xiaochun will give up on pill concocting!” Spirits soaring, and bursting with self-confidence, he carried the medicinal pill over to the waterfall entrance of the Ancient Beast Chasm. Without any hesitation, he threw the pill down.

The pill disappeared soundlessly into the darkness. Bai Xiaochun stood there on the edge of the chasm, waiting. Time passed. After a full hour had gone by, he was starting to get nervous, despite his confidence.

“No way! I increased the medicinal efficacy by over a thousand-fold!” Another hour passed, and Bai Xiaochun was starting to sweat anxiously. Suddenly, the mist in the chasm began to swirl, and a roar echoed out that could shake heaven and earth. As it blasted out from within the mist, accompanied by a gale force wind, Bai Xiaochun backed up a few paces.

Then, an enormous column of swirling black mist rocketed up into the air, twisting and turning. At the same time, an exultant voice echoed out in all directions.

“At long last... I can sense my life essence surging!!” Then, the column of mist began to collapse, and a huge clawed hand reached out from within the chasm. When it grabbed onto the mountain cliff off to the side, the ground quaked.

The hand was pitch black and covered with scales the size of people. The claws were razor-sharp, and glowed faintly, radiating an energy that left one trembling.

An enormous, mountain-like head then emerged from within the chasm, pitch black, with a shocking horn stretching out from its forehead. The mere appearance of that horn seemed to make everything in the area blurry.

One might expect a dragon’s eyes to be nine meters wide, but this dragon’s eyes were even larger. It radiated a profoundly ancient aura, and its head was crisscrossed with scars of all types. One could only imagine the fierce battles the dragon had fought in the past.

Although it was ancient, it still radiated incredible energy and power. When it threw its head back and roared, all of the beasts in the jungle prostrated themselves and remained on the ground, completely unmoving.

Bai Xiaochun forced himself to swallow. This dragon was unimaginably large, and what was most frightening was that less than half of its body had emerged from the chasm. Bai Xiaochun's knees began to go weak, and his mind was spinning.

It was about then that the huge dragon glanced down at Bai Xiaochun, and then lowered its head down to his level.

Bai Xiaochun immediately felt incredible pressure weighing down on him. The head in front of him filled his field of vision, obscuring everything else.

More anxious than ever, he blurted, "Senior Heavenhorn, it's me, Bai Xiaochun! Remember me? I concocted that medicinal pill. It took me half a month! I very nearly worked myself to death in the process."

The Heavenhorn ink dragon looked at him for a moment, and then smiled. Of course, from Bai Xiaochun's perspective, that smile was hair-raisingly terrifying. Before he could say anything further, the gigantic dragon shrank down right there in front of him. Within the blink of an eye, it was a nine-meter-long black lizard.

It actually looked very similar to the lizard from Archway Peak.

The lizard landed in front of Bai Xiaochun, and as soon as its claws touched the ground, everything in the area distorted. When things grew clear again, Bai Xiaochun was shocked to find that they were back in the rear courtyard of the honor guard station.



“Somehow you got your hands on a Beastbirth Seed,” the dragon said. “I could sense it the moment you brought it here.... It pulls you into a hallucination, extract your life force, then uses it to condense ancestral awakening blood. With this seed, my bloodline can finally be passed on.” The Heavenhorn ink dragon sighed. Completely ignoring Bai Xiaochun, it approached the Beastbirth Flower, which began to tremble, and then slowly opened.

The Heavenhorn ink dragon didn’t resist as the flower swallowed it up. In fact, it even seemed to have an expression of anticipation on its face.

Bai Xiaochun waited nervously off to the side, watching the Beastbirth Flower, wondering what sort of illusion the Heavenhorn ink dragon was experiencing. Unlike the other beasts, which were relatively quiet, this time, roars echoed out. Bai Xiaochun felt like he was about to cry. He suddenly had the feeling that maybe he’d pushed things too far, that maybe his Beastbirth Flower couldn’t handle the terrifying Heavenhorn ink dragon.

Praying nervously, he waited for four hours. Finally, the Heavenhorn ink dragon flew out, expression somber. After a moment, it flew right back into the flower.

Time passed. For the following nine days, Bai Xiaochun watched in shock as the Heavenhorn ink dragon surpassed the black dog’s accomplishments. It contributed more than fifty times before flying away.

“Illusions are nice, but they’re merely the past.... I like you, kiddo. If you ever need help with anything in the future, I’ll do my

best to accommodate, as long as it's not too outrageous." The voice of the sect's holy beast guardian rang like a huge bell as it expressed its appreciation toward Bai Xiaochun. Just as it was turning to leave, Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment. From his perspective, he had just provided a great service to the sect, and had done a very good deed.

Face filled with anticipation, he said, "Senior Heavenhorn, do you think you could get the spirit beast guardians from the four mountain peaks of the north bank to come contribute a bit? Maybe even the beasts belonging to the peak lords...?"

"Those runts? No problem!" The Heavenhorn ink dragon grinned and then took a deep breath. Bai Xiaochun sensed heaven and earth distorting for a moment, and then, the seven-colored phoenix, the three-eyed raven, the mountain ghost and the Archway Peak lizard all appeared in front of the Heavenhorn ink dragon. Also present were the battle beasts belonging to the peak lords.

The instant they appeared, they began to tremble, their eyes shining with fear. Even the three-eyed raven and the seven-colored phoenix were shivering, and the mountain ghost knelt down on the ground.

The Archway Peak lizard seemed even more frightened as it prostrated itself. The peak lords' beasts were the most terrified of all.

Bai Xiaochun looked on ecstatically as all of these insufferably arrogant beasts obediently complied with the instructions given by

the Heavenhorn ink dragon. One by one, they entered the Beastbirth Flower to offer contributions. The following morning, they left, looking somewhat dazed. The Heavenhorn ink dragon also departed, giving Bai Xiaochun a final look of praise.

Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously. By this point, the Beastbirth Flower was beginning to close in on itself. It was no longer emitting any aura or fragrance, and was clearly about to give birth to the battle beast inside, to Bai Xiaochun's delight and pride. Recently, he had heard about how the disciples of the north bank were investigating the situation regarding the battle beasts, and couldn't help but chuckle proudly.

“Bai Xiaochun is about to have the ultimate battle beast. Hmph! You north bank disciples should be shaking in fear! I already thought of a name for him. [Bruiser](#)!

In Chinese, the name Bai Xiaochun picks is supposed to sound tough, but comes across as funny and somewhat low class. It's the kind of name that will provoke a chuckle from Chinese readers, and I think this English version captures roughly the same feeling as the original.

“Not only did you refuse to lend me your battle beasts, you even slandered my name! Just wait until you realize what happened. Once you figure out your beasts contributed their own life force essence at my behest, then I'll slip back to the south bank and you won't be able to do anything about it. Hahahahahahahahaha!” Sticking his chin up, he waved his sleeve and assumed the pose of a lonely hero, doing nothing to cover up the look of pride on his face.

However, in that very moment of beauty, he suddenly felt as if

someone were watching him. Shocked, he turned around and saw that there next to the honor guard station, a newcomer had arrived at some point. It was none other than... the miraculously stealthy, long-eared rabbit!

After gaping in shock for a moment, he shrieked, “Y-y-you... you damned talking rabbit! What are you doing here!?!?”

The rabbit gaped in shock and then shrieked, “Y-y-you... you damned talking rabbit! What are you doing here!?!?”

With that, it turned tail and vanished in a blur, moving faster than the black dog ever could.

# Chapter 135: The North Bank Erupts!

---

“Aghhhh! Don’t spread that!!” he shouted. Well aware of the rabbit’s proclivities, he burst into motion, wings popping out behind him as he gave chase at top speed.

However, the rabbit was far too fast. Soon, only its voice could be heard, echoing out in the distance.

“Aghhhh! Don’t spread that!!”

After chasing the rabbit in vain for some time, Bai Xiaochun found to his despair that, despite being in the tenth level of Qi Condensation... he wasn’t even close to being as fast as the rabbit. Its god-like speed was completely beyond belief.

“I’m finished. Kaput....” he muttered, staring blankly at the disappearing rabbit. He stood there trembling, mind spinning. Even in his wildest dreams, he would never have imagined that the talking rabbit would somehow show up on the north bank. It was like a nightmare come true.

“What did I just say?” he muttered, tugging at his hair. “How much did the rabbit hear...?” He felt like crying. The incredibly stealthy talking rabbit had pushed him to the brink of madness. If things like this kept happening, he was certain that it would start affecting him mentally. Maybe he should just stop talking from now on.

He already regretted creating the strange pill which had led to

the creation of this incredibly annoying talking rabbit.

“That damned rabbit probably didn’t hear anything. Definitely nothing. If it did, it would have started repeating it immediately!” Still jittery, he sniffled a bit as he tried to comfort himself, and yet, it did little good. The talking rabbit was like a pill furnace that could explode at any moment, shaking heaven and earth.

He returned nervously to the honor guard station, where he straightened things up in case he needed to make a sudden break for the south bank. Then, he looked nervously at his Beastbirth Flower.

“Three days. My ultimate battle beast will appear in three days!!” Eyes bloodshot, he could do little more than wait nervously. The black dog dragged over another battle beast, but Bai Xiaochun staunchly turned it away and explained that in the future, there would be no need for any further contributions or any other battle beasts.

The black dog didn’t look very happy, and immediately bared its teeth in ferocious fashion. Bai Xiaochun’s heart began to thump, and he coughed dryly.

“Well, it’s not that set in stone....” he said. “Look, there’s a super stealthy rabbit that’s been lurking around the north bank. It loves to chatter constantly. Why don’t you go catch that for me!?”

The dog looked back suspiciously at Bai Xiaochun, who continued to gesticulate wildly and offer further explanations. Finally, the

dog understood, and it turned and vanished in a black blur.

Bai Xiaochun watched it go, eyes sparkling with anticipation.

“Good luck, buddy. If you can get that rabbit for me, I’ll do everything I can to find another Beastbirth Seed for you!” The mere thought of the terrifying talking rabbit caused Bai Xiaochun to sigh. Heading back into the rear courtyard, he continued to wait anxiously.

Another day passed.

During that time, Bai Xiaochun kept his ears focused on any possible sounds coming from outside. All of the north bank disciples were in a stir as they searched for the reason why their battle beasts had suddenly changed. Of course, people already suspected Bai Xiaochun, and even came to look around the honor guard station. However, he had done a good job of making sure that no one saw the Beastbirth Flower.

Furthermore, he had carried out all his activities at night, and had been very careful not to leave behind any clues. Therefore, although people suspected him, there was no incriminating evidence, so eventually, the disciples left him alone.

Bai Xiaochun only got more nervous, though. Another day passed, and the investigation grew more serious. That was especially true among the disciples whose battle beasts had become a lot harder to control. They were constantly breaking out into fits of rage.

“What exactly is going on here!?”

“Maybe it’s some sort of plague? But it doesn’t seem like a plague. That can’t be the reason!”

“Something fishy is going on. Something very very fishy!”

The north bank was in a frenzy, and was bubbling on the point of an eruption. Massive amounts of Outer Sect disciples were involved in the investigation, as were Inner Sect disciples. Even the peak lords got involved. Soon, it was only half a day before the Beastbirth Flower was due to bloom. That was when a clue was finally unturned.

“Beihaan Lie’s old Nightstalker Beast!”

“It took away a battle beast recently, and when the beast returned, it had a very strange expression on its face!”

“Find that dog!”

Enraged, the north bank disciples spread out everywhere on the north bank. Soon, they found the black dog, and at the same time, they found a rabbit.

The rabbit was flying along helter skelter as it was chased by the black dog.



If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal. However, it wasn't long before the faces of the disciples flickered in shock as they realized that the rabbit was talking.

“Junior Sister Meixiang, considering my status as the peak lord of Ghostfang Peak, I hereby swear that I will never allow Li Qinghou to win your hand!

“Ooh, you're so naughty, Elder Sun....

“Hahaha! This medicinal pill is incredible. I, Bai Xiaochun, am clearly super awesome. This rabbit can actually talk!

“Bai Xiaochun is about to have the ultimate battle beast. Hmph! You north bank disciples should be shaking in fear!

“Not only did you refuse to lend me your battle beasts, you even slandered my name! Just wait until you realize what happened. Once you figure out your beasts contributed their own life force essence at my behest, then I'll slip back to the south bank and you won't be able to do anything about it. Hahahahahahahahaha!”

As the rabbit sped along spewing its vivid and realistic lines of dialogue, the north bank disciples stared mutely. However, when it reached the end of the passages, they realized that this strange and marvelous rabbit had been created by Bai Xiaochun, and that it loved to talk!

The north bank disciples were trembling, their eyes wide, their breath coming in ragged pants. They watched as the black dog chased after the rabbit, and the two disappeared off into the distance.

“Contributed life force essence?”

“When we realize what happened with our beasts, Bai Xiaochun plans to slip back to the south bank?”

“Bai Xiaochun!!!” Countless north bank disciples howled in rage, especially the ones whose battle beasts had been affected. All of them began to fly at top speed in the direction of the Beast Conservatory, causing heaven and earth to shake violently.

As the rabbit ran along, it continued to talk, until eventually, all of the north bank disciples heard it. Eyes wide, they bellowed in rage, causing all of the north bank to quake.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

“So, you were the one who did this!! You want to slip back to the south bank?”

“Take Bai Xiaochun down!!”

The north bank disciples were maddened. The Outer Sect, the Inner Sect, and even many of the elders appeared and began to rush in the direction of the Beast Conservatory.

As the stealthy rabbit fled from the black dog, it suddenly stopped in place, as it realized that an old monkey had appeared in front of it out of nowhere. The monkey's expression was serious as it stared at the rabbit for a moment, and then spoke in a profoundly ancient and threatening voice.

“Who exactly are you, rabbit?!”

The rabbit looked back with an expression as ancient and threatening as the monkey's.

“Who exactly are you, rabbit?!” it said.

The monkey eyes flickered sharply, and it suddenly launched itself toward the rabbit. The same look appeared in the rabbit's eyes as it turned and fled. A moment later, the monkey and the rabbit were nowhere to be seen.

Meanwhile, back in the Beast Conservatory, Bai Xiaochun was waiting anxiously. In only four more hours, the ultimate battle beast would appear. It was at that point that an intense rumbling sound rose up outside, and soon, figures appeared, rushing in his direction.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Enraged north bank disciples closed in, not even pausing before they slammed into the spell formation shield surrounding the honor guard station. Incredible rumbling sounds echoed out, and the spell formation trembled. Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and his heart began to pound.

“What are you people doing?!?! I’m a Prestige disciple! I’m the Junior Brother of the sect leader. I’ve spilled–”

“It doesn’t matter who you are!” shouted the mob. Soon, cracking sounds were emanating from the spell formation under the combined bombardment of the crowd. It was already on the verge of breaking.

Bai Xiaochun’s scalp was tingling with fear as he realized how truly ferocious the north bank disciples were. The south bank disciples usually resorted to throwing rocks, but the north bank disciples were actually unleashing full attacks. All of a sudden, he realized that if the spell formation broke, he would quickly be reduced to a bloody paste.

“Help! They’re trying to kill me!!” he screamed, backing up. He felt utterly wronged by these bullying north bank disciples. First they provoked him, then they slandered him, and when he simply borrowed their beasts for some contributions, they tried to kill him.

In the instant that he began to back up, the spell formation shattered, and countless north bank disciples prepared to charge in. It was at that point that a cold snort echoed out from the sky above, and the four peak lords of the north bank descended to intervene.

The old woman from Irispetal Peak looked out at the north bank disciples.

Unwilling to accept that Bai Xiaochun was being protected, some of the disciples spoke out. “Peak lord, we’re–”

“Shut up!” said the old lady, her voice booming like thunder. “How dare you attack the Beast Conservatory! What shocking behavior!”

The surrounding disciples fidgeted in place apprehensively.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Bai Xiaochun solemnly added, “That’s right! How dare you attack the Beast Conservatory! What shocking behavior!”

“You shut up too!” the old woman said, turning to glare at Bai Xiaochun. Just when she was about to continue speaking, her eyes went wide as she noticed the Beastbirth Flower in the rear courtyard. Even as she gasped, the other peak lords began to tremble.

“A Beastbirth Flower!!”

## Chapter 136: They All Came Over

---

The four peak lords shot toward the Beastbirth Flower, panting, trembling inwardly. It was as if they had just caught sight of the most precious treasure in the world. The old woman from Irispetal Peak suddenly looked as if her face had even more wrinkles than before....

The other three peak lords were equally excited as they reached out to actually touch the Beastbirth Flower. To them, it was something holy, something that completely filled their field of vision, obscuring everything else in existence.

The surrounding disciples were struck mute. Most of them didn't even know what a Beastbirth Seed was, and were struck with fear by the actions of the four peak lords.

However, a few of the Inner Sect disciples knew what they were looking at. That was especially the case considering the words the peak lords had just uttered. Those disciples were completely shaken, their hearts battered by enormous waves of astonishment.

“Beastbirth Flower?!?! Heavens! Is that really the flower of a Beastbirth Seed?!”

“That's a legendary holy object, rarely seen in the world!!”

“I've only read about it in the ancient records. Supposedly, they went extinct in ancient times. I can't believe there's one sitting right here!!”

The voices grew louder and louder. The tens of thousands of people present soon realized that the seemingly ordinary, although rather large plant, was actually an indescribably valuable object. Everyone was clamoring about the Beastbirth Flower, and soon forgot that they had come to cause trouble for Bai Xiaochun.

It only took a few moments for the area to get extremely noisy, until finally, the old man from Ghostfang Peak turned and gave a harsh look to the crowd. Almost instantly, the voices died down.

Bai Xiaochun stood off to the side, his chin stuck up into the air, looking very much like a lonely hero.

“Humph. Now do you people understand why I, Bai Xiaochun, needed contributions from so many battle beasts? It was all for my Beastbirth Flower!” Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding with excitement and pride, but he kept the lonely expression on his face. At the same time, the four peak lords stood there, their expressions going back and forth between enchantment and frustration. In the end though, they were gritting their teeth, and then gnashing them. That was especially true of the old woman from Irispetal Peak, whose eyes were completely bloodshot.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” she cried, sounding both furious and filled with grief. “Don’t you know how valuable this Beastbirth Flower is? Don’t you know that these things are extinct!? Don’t you know what this Beastbirth Flower represents?!?!” The old woman was raving as if mad, her heart figuratively dripping with blood, convinced that if she were the one to have come to possess the Beastbirth Seed, things would have been completely different.

“Of course I do,” Bai Xiaochun answered, surprised. He wouldn’t have riled up the entire north bank if he hadn’t been aware of how valuable it was.

In the moment of the old woman’s sorrow, the other three peak lords looked over at Bai Xiaochun, their gazes as sharp as blades. They knew how indescribably valuable a Beastbirth Seed was. It was like a precious treasure, and from the way they were looking at Bai Xiaochun right now, they were completely and utterly disappointed.

“I can’t believe you planted such a precious seed right here!” the old woman raged. “And now the process is almost complete. It’s going to give birth to a beast soon!

“Y-y-you.... Bai Xiaochun, it’s obvious that your actions led to all the battle beasts in the sect going crazy. But what use was that? All of those beasts had low order bloodlines!!

“Don’t you realize that we could have used that Beastbirth Seed with Elder Sun’s jasper seamonster to give birth to another beast with a third order bloodline?!?! But now, it’s too late! Too, too late....”

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times and then cleared his throat. “Elder Sun’s jasper seamonster also contributed.”

“You... wait, what?” The old woman was about to continue her tirade, but instead, her jaw dropped. The other three peak lord’s



had similar reactions as they looked out into the crowd to find Elder Sun looking back at them with a shocked expression on his face. He had come, not because he had noticed any abnormality in his battle beast, but because of the problem with the disciples' beasts. It was only in this moment that he suddenly heard that his own jasper sea monster had come to "contribute."

After a moment of hesitation, the old woman's fury returned.

"Even Elder Sun's jasper sea monster would have been a waste of the Beastbirth Seed. Take Elder Chan's blue sky boa. It only has a third order bloodline, but it might be able to transform into a dragon one day. Furthermore, that clear sky boa is the only one that can—"

Before she could finish, Bai Xiaochun gingerly interrupted. "The blue sky boa also came to contribute."

The old woman's eyes went wide. Out in the crowd, Elder Chen gasped and looked down at this bag of beast raising. In that moment, a blue snake stuck its head out and looked in the direction of the Beastbirth Flower, seemingly drunk with passion.

"Elder Chen's blue sky boa is still strong and young," said the peak lord from Ghostfang Peak, his voice quavering with rage. "We can breed it even without a Beastbirth Seed. Bai Xiaochun, my own yaksha beast is perfectly suited for a Beastbirth Seed. If only you—"

"Um... Peak Lord Wu, your yaksha beast... also came to contribute."

Peak Lord Wu wasn't the only one to gasp. All of the surrounding disciples were completely shocked by what they were hearing.

The other peak lords were about to say more, when Bai Xiaochun edged back a few steps and then carefully said, "All of your beasts came to contribute...."

The four peak lords felt as if they were being struck by lightning. How could they have been completely unaware that their own battle beasts secretly came here? Simultaneously, the surrounding disciples were left gasping to the point where they couldn't remain silent any longer.

"Heavens, how many beasts came to contribute!?!?"

"This Bai Xiaochun, he... he didn't even let the peak lords' beasts off the hook!"

"How deranged!!"

As the shouting of the crowd grew louder, Bai Xiaochun started to get nervous, and backed up a bit more, keeping his eyes on the four peak lords the entire time. After a moment passed, the old woman from Irispetal Peak intensified her glare.

"Well, it seems I underestimated you, Bai Xiaochun. You even managed to sneak all of the peak lords' battle beasts over here. Well then, why did you stop there? Why didn't you bring over the

seven-colored phoenix from Irispetal Peak? Our battle beasts have third order bloodlines, but the seven-colored phoenix's is fourth order. A fourth order bloodline would definitely not be a waste of...." Before she could finish speaking, she noticed the cautious expression on Bai Xiaochun's face, and her heart flip-flopped. "You... you didn't...."

"The seven-colored phoenix also came to contribute," Bai Xiaochun said, sounding a bit wronged.

"What about the three-eyed raven from Archway Peak...."

"Also contributed," Bai Xiaochun said, steeling himself. "Plus the lizard from Sunset Peak, and the mountain ghost from Ghostfang Peak..... They all came to contribute."

The peak lords' eyes went wide, and they gasped in disbelief. Moments later, they produced jade slips, and used some unknown method to communicate with the spirit beast guardians. A moment later, the information was confirmed, although the spirit beast guardians didn't dare to mention the Heavenhorn ink dragon. Afterward, the peak lords stared at Bai Xiaochun with wide eyes, looking completely incredulous.

The surrounding north bank disciples were also left gasping in shock. Beihan Lie shivered, more convinced than ever of how strong Bai Xiaochun was. Xu Song's mind was spinning; he was well aware of how terrifying the four spirit beast guardians were, and couldn't imagine how Bai Xiaochun could possibly have convinced them to offer contributions.

The old woman from Irispetal Peak felt like she was going crazy. She had started out with the intention of teaching Bai Xiaochun a lesson, but the more she spoke, the more she realized she had nothing to say. Bai Xiaochun knew how valuable a Beastbirth Seed was, and had even managed to get the most powerful beasts on the north bank to contribute. Even if she had tried to do such a thing, she might not have been able to pull it off.

However, considering that there were so many disciples watching, all of them completely speechless because of Bai Xiaochun's explanations, the old woman's anger grew. Flicking her sleeve, she said, "Still a waste! Bai Xiaochun, don't you know that if you had given that Beastbirth Seed to one of the prime elders, even the patriarchs would have been shocked? They could have issued a Dharmic decree to arrange for the sect's holy beast guardian, the Heavenhorn ink dragon, to use that seed to give birth to a new generation! Now that would most certainly have not been a waste. That...." At first, she started getting more and more worked up into a rage, but eventually realized that Bai Xiaochun appeared to be trying to cut in, and stopped talking. The old woman's heart began to pound....

She wasn't the only one. The expression on Bai Xiaochun's face caused the other three peak lords to suck in deep breaths.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and then quietly said, "Well... I don't think we need to bother the patriarchs to get a Dharmic decree. Senior Heavenhorn ink dragon came over three days ago. He was more than happy to help, and even contributed more than fifty times...."

The entire area was as silent as death.

The four peak lords were dumbstruck, as were the elders and the disciples. Everyone was staring at Bai Xiaochun, their hearts pounding with astonishment that could shake the heavens and topple the earth.

It was at that point that the Beastbirth Flower suddenly began to wither, and one after another, petals began to fall off. A powerful life force essence appeared within the flower, which grew stronger and stronger by the moment. It didn't take long before the peak lords, the elders, and the ordinary disciples were all paying rapt attention to the flower.

The spirit beast guardians of the four mountain peaks were all trembling, as if they could sense their own progeny, and countless ordinary battle beasts were all trembling with a similar sensation.

Deep within the Ancient Beast Chasm, the Heavenhorn ink dragon opened its eyes and looked out into the Beast Conservatory with an expression of keen anticipation.

Bai Xiaochun stood off to the side nervously, wondering how things would turn out. The peak lords were close by him, breathing in ragged pants.

Slowly, the Beastbirth Flower continued to wither, and the life force aura grew stronger, as if something were about to burst out from inside. At this point, a vortex appeared up above, slowly

spinning round and round, almost as if there were eyes above in the heavens, looking down at the scene playing out below.

# Chapter 137: My Battle Beast!

---

By this point, virtually everyone on the north bank was paying close attention to the events playing out in the Beast Conservatory. Numerous eyes from Mount Daoseed were also watching.

“That’s... huh?”

Even as expressions of surprise rang out, suddenly, the vortex up above turned crimson, causing the entire sky to turn red.

A bloodcurdling shriek then emanated from within the withered Beastbirth Flower. Simultaneously, the powerful aura suddenly began to decline. If that process was completed, it would indicate that whatever was inside the flower had died.

It would expire prematurely, never even having a chance to be born. Bai Xiaochun began to tremble, and the four peak lords were all astonished.

“It has a heterogeneous bloodline! Its mind is having trouble keeping its body in one piece!”

“Dammit! I knew this was going to happen!”

“That beast will never see the light of day....”

Even as the four peak lords expressed their shock, Bai Xiaochun

trembled and stared at the Beastbirth Flower. He could sense that the life inside wished to emerge, but that it wasn't able to. It was now hovering on the brink of dying, and even exuded a powerful aura of death.

Suddenly, a blurry figure appeared in the air above the Beastbirth Flower. It was impossible to see him clearly, but he seemed to be an old man in a white robe. He hovered there calmly, completely devoid of any aura whatsoever.

His cultivation base was... completely unreadable!

Everyone was shaken mentally. The numerous disciples present had never seen this old man before, but the peak lords had, and they were left completely astonished. Their eyes went wide, and they dropped to their knees to kowtow.

“Third Generation Patriarch....”

When the disciples heard that, their minds spun, and they also dropped down and kowtowed.

Bai Xiaochun was somewhat in a daze, and didn't even notice the newcomer. His attention was completely focused on the life inside the withered Beastbirth Flower, his heart trembling, tears welling up in his eyes.

The white-robed old man looked over at the flower, and then his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture as he sent life force



pouring inside. However, a moment later, the aura of death became even stronger than before.

Muttering something inaudible, the white-robed old man turned to look in the direction of the Ancient Beast Chasm.

There, the Heavenhorn ink dragon opened its mouth, and a golden drop of blood flew out, causing the dragon to age visibly. At the same time, Heavenhorn looked at the Beastbirth Flower with anxious anticipation.

The golden drop of blood streaked through the air like a golden beam of light, all the way to the Beastbirth Flower. The white-robed old man sighed. Eyes shining brightly, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing the clouds in the sky to churn and form together into a magical symbol, which merged with the golden drop of blood as it entered the Beastbirth Flower.

“With a heterogenous bloodline, its chances of survival are minimal,” the old man said. “This will sustain it for nine days at the most. Whether or not it lives and manages to fight its way out of the Beastbirth Flower is up to the willpower of the beast itself. What a pity.... After all, it would appear that it’s a spirit creature with a fifth order bloodline.” Even this old man couldn’t completely defy the heavens and alter fate. The beast’s fate rested completely on its own fortune.

He glanced over at Bai Xiaochun, a look of pity in his eyes, then swished his sleeve and faded away into motes of glittering light.

After he left, the four peak lords slowly rose to their feet. After staring reverently at the spot where the old man had disappeared, they turned to look at Bai Xiaochun, who was still standing there blankly next to the Beastbirth Flower.

All of them seemed somewhat disturbed. Anyone who had worked as hard as Bai Xiaochun had, only to find that the battle beast might not be born, would be upset. That was especially true considering how rare Beastbirth Seeds were in the cultivation world.

The four peak lords sighed. Their anger toward Bai Xiaochun had vanished, and they slowly began to make their way off into the distance. Neither could the north bank disciples cause problems for Bai Xiaochun considering the sudden turn of events. Although many of them were still angry, they simply turned and quietly left.

Soon, evening had fallen, and Bai Xiaochun was the only person left in the Beast Conservatory. He stood there staring blankly at the withered Beastbirth Flower, and the tiny figure struggling inside. The creature seemed to be fighting an epic battle for its life.

Tears began to roll down Bai Xiaochun's cheeks as he slowly took a step forward and sat down next to the Beastbirth Flower, then reached out to place his hand on its surface.

The grief he was feeling was plainly visible on his face; he just couldn't quite make himself accept that this was happening. At the moment, he felt no desire to see the ultimate battle beast. He just wanted the little life form inside of the flower to live, even if it wasn't powerful at all.

He had given life to this creature, and the idea of watching it die was as painful as having a sword stab into his heart. Even worse was that there was nothing he could do. He was in the tenth level of Qi Condensation, and yet was powerless. That feeling left him feeling suffocated and helpless.

Night fell. The helplessness of watching the life of the creature fading away left Bai Xiaochun trembling in fear. He couldn't help but think back to life in the village, when his parents were sick and ailing. They had clasped him by the hand and told him... to keep on living.

Those three words would exist eternally within Bai Xiaochun's mind.

"Keep on living...." he said softly, tears glistening on his cheeks. "You have to keep on living...."

"Don't die, Bruiser...." He gently rubbed the spot on the flower where the little creature's body bulged out slightly. When he called it by name, the tiny thing seemed to recognize his aura, and moved slightly.

"Hang in there. You haven't even seen the world yet! I've never even had a chance to see you. I want to take you to see everything in the cultivation world...."

"Keep hanging in here!" Bai Xiaochun's softly spoken words were filled with determination. He kept talking throughout the night,

continuing to rub the bulge that was the little creature. He was doing the only thing he could; staying by the creature's side, encouraging it, praying.

Dawn broke. Then it was noon, and evening. Eventually, the moon was shining up above....

The first day passed, and the struggling of the little creature in the Beastbirth Flower was getting weaker. However, it hadn't given up. Its heterogeneous bloodline made it difficult to keep its body from falling to pieces, but it was trying hard.

Bai Xiaochun forgot about everything else. The only thing he cared about was the little creature in the Beastbirth Flower. He whispered to it, caressed it softly, and poured his heart and soul into encouraging it. He never stopped talking, and even began to send his own spiritual power into the flower. He wasn't sure if it would do any good, but he tried anyway.

Gradually, the second day came and went. Then the third day, and the fourth....

Bai Xiaochun never rested. His eyes were soon completely bloodshot, and his spiritual power had long since begun to run dry. Every time the least bit of spiritual power built up within him, he would send it into the Beastbirth Flower.

That spiritual power was filled with his blessings, his sorrows, and with comfort. He never stopped talking, never stopped offering encouragement. Whenever the little creature started

struggling, and began to wail in pain, Bai Xiaochun's soothing voice would cause it to calm down. However, despite all that, Bai Xiaochun was devastated to find that the tiny creature's aura was growing weaker and weaker, while the aura of death grew stronger and stronger.

“Bruiser,” he murmured, “you know, back when I was young, when my dad and mom were still around, I wasn't very scared of dying.... In fact, I didn't even really know what death was....

“Once you're feeling better, I'll take you to see Uncle Li. He treats me really well, just like a father....” He began to tell stories about himself, about his past, about life in the village, and things about the sect.

Late into the night of the fourth day, the spirit beast guardians of the four mountains, and even Heavenhorn deep in the chasm, all sighed and looked away from Bai Xiaochun and the Beastbirth Flower. However, in the darkness of that night, there was a big black dog that appeared outside the honor guard station. It walked into the rear courtyard and sat down next to Bai Xiaochun. Expression one of grief, it looked at the little life inside the Beast Conservatory, then reached out and licked the flower.

Another day passed. On evening of the fifth day, Bai Xiaochun was exhausted. To him, the past five days had left him feeling as tired as if he had ceaselessly concocted medicine for five months. And yet, he had no intention of giving up. He continued to offer comfort and encouragement. He never stopped talking. Unfortunately, the little creature only continued to weaken. Deep in the night of the fifth day, it suddenly struggled fiercely for a few

moments, then started twitching. After a moment, it stopped moving, and the aura of death spread out to completely cover Bai Xiaochun and the black dog.

Bai Xiaochun placed his hand onto the spot where the tiny creature bulged out of the flower. Tears streaming down his face, he shouted, “Live! You have to live!

“When the Luochen Clan was trying to chase me down, ten people tried to kill me, but I kept on living. They tried to kill me, so I killed them! I even broke my own arm for a chance to stay alive! You have to do the same thing. Live! Keep on living!!!”

Even as he shouted, he poured spiritual power into the flower. A moment later, the motionless little creature trembled, and began to struggle again. As the moments passed, the struggling grew more intense, as if its desire to live were growing even stronger because of Bai Xiaochun’s encouragement.

Bai Xiaochun wiped the tears off of his face and shouted, “If you want to live, you have to fight for it! Take control of your body. Break out of that flower!”

The little creature began to struggle even harder, letting out little whimpering sounds as it did. Every time it struggled, it felt pain, and was left trembling. And yet, it didn’t give up. It was as if an intense willpower was supporting it, a willpower that continued to grow stronger, something that exceeded its desire merely to live. That power was the most important thing in its life.

“You’re the ultimate battle beast! We’re gonna be partners for life. I made you, I raised you, and I’m not gonna let you die!!” By this point, Bai Xiaochun’s voice was hoarse from the yelling, and he almost seemed to have gone mad.

For the past five days, he had been offering encouragement to this little creature, and finally, it stopped whimpering. Instead, it let out a little roar. Although the sound of it was weak, it was still a roar. Simultaneously, its fading life force suddenly burned as hot as fire. It exploded majestically, and up above, clouds began to churn and seethe. It was as if the little creature’s willpower was allowing it to finally fight for its life again.

The fluctuations emanating out attracted the attention of others on the north bank. Numerous disciples were shocked, and the four astonished peak lords began to rush in the direction of the Beast Conservatory. It was the same with the ordinary disciples. Faces flickering, they raced over toward the Beast Conservatory as the life force in the Beastbirth Flower began to surge with power. As for the cloud cover up above, it was growing thicker by the moment.

The spirit beast guardians, Heavenhorn, and even many eyes from Mount Daoseed were watching. Even the shadowy, white-robed old man looked on, although no one could see him.

The fifth day passed, and the sixth day arrived. By this point, the roars of the creature in the Beastbirth Flower had reached a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering level. The energy surging out from the flower caused the exhausted Bai Xiaochun to stagger backward until he was leaning up against the wall of the courtyard.

Even the big black dog was pushed back.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the side of the Beastbirth Flower was ripped open by razor-sharp claws that seemed capable of shredding even the air itself. Flames flickered around the claws, and anyone who was able to see them was completely shocked.

Then, the claws ripped the flower open even more, and finally... a little beast appeared!

He looked like a horse, a dog, a lizard, a crocodile, and a dragon!

His head had a long horn, and his back had a crest of white hair running down it. His body was covered with black scales, and he had sharp teeth. Currently, his eyes were tightly closed.

“That’s....” the white-robed old man up in midair looked on with a strange gleam in his eyes, his heart trembling. He had never imagined that the scrappy little creature would actually manage to stay alive. From the look of it, the creature had unlimited potential, and even the chance to increase its bloodline order!

Deep in the Ancient Beast Chasm, the Heavenhorn ink dragon suddenly opened its eyes, and the four spirit beast guardians trembled. All of the battle beasts on the north bank were shaking.

Everyone looking on was left gasping. Anyone with eyes could tell at a glance that this little beast... was far beyond ordinary!!



The four peak lords all gasped, and their eyes shone with strange light.

“It can unleash a magical technique from birth, and its claws emanate flames. That means... it has a sixth order bloodline! Heavens! A spirit creature with a sixth order bloodline has actually appeared in the Spirit Stream Sect!!”

“It’s a future holy beast guardian of the north bank!!”

“Hahaha! The north bank has finally produced a spirit creature that surpasses the Heavenhorn ink dragon. A sixth order bloodline!”

People involuntarily rushed forward to get a closer look, blocking Bai Xiaochun’s view, as he was still leaning up against the wall. He didn’t care. He was just happy that Bruiser had made it through his ordeal. He chuckled.

“As long as you’re alive....”

The little beast’s eyes suddenly opened, and he glared around. They were charming eyes, filled with intelligence, as well as flickering black flames. Clearly, the creature was looking for something.

The first action he took after opening his eyes very significant, and although none of the disciples understood, the white-robed old man was mentally shaken.

“It’s looking for....”

Because of the crowd, the little beast was apparently unable to find what he was looking for, and started to get anxious. Seemingly angry, he began to let out little roars.

It was at that moment....

Bai Xiaochun pushed himself off the wall. Exhausted, but excited and happy, he threaded through the crowd toward the little beast.

“Bruiser....” he called softly.

Instantly, the little beast shivered, and then turned his glittering eyes toward the place where Bai Xiaochun was pushing through the crowd. The little beast’s gaze softened, and a gleam of joy could be seen therein, as if he were looking at his closest relative.

He had found what he was looking for!

Apparently... the willpower which had sustained his final struggle to break out of the Beastbirth Flower, had been born from the desire to open his eyes and gaze upon the person who had warmly comforted him, who had soothed him during his difficult struggle! That was enough!

Such emotions, such willpower, exceeded the desire to simply

live!

As of this moment, it was clear that to Bruiser, the only thing that mattered in this strange new world was Bai Xiaochun. No matter how many people were in between them, all Bai Xiaochun had to do was speak, and all those other people would disappear. To Bruiser, Bai Xiaochun was everything.

## Chapter 138: Bruiser's Hobby....

---

Up in midair, the white-robed old man sighed. He knew that this creature would never accept any other master, not for its entire life. Even if someone tried to force it to do so, its dependence on Bai Xiaochun was part of its blood, and would always be a powerful hindrance.

In this world, it would only have one master, for all eternity... Bai Xiaochun.

Even if Bai Xiaochun perished one day, the beast would never, ever forget him.

There was no bonding magic at work; the two of them had a deep relationship that surpassed any such bond. The white-robed old man shook his head and looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun, musing to himself that he deserved to have such a relationship. He had created this battle beast, and during the most dangerous period of its life, had stayed by its side, constantly encouraging it.

“Perhaps the only thing that could truly move a sixth order bloodline battle beast to accept someone is the kind of pure-hearted sincerity this kid has. He didn't have any schemes, just a strong desire that the beast keep on living.

“I hope... that this kid can remain pure-hearted like this for the rest of his life. Hopefully no unexpected event changes that heart of his, years down the line.” The man turned to leave, looking somewhat melancholy as he thought back to how pure and

inexperienced he had been when he took his first steps into the world of cultivation.

Eventually, the crowds began to depart. The female disciples were reluctant to leave; the little beast's wide, charming eyes were completely captivating. However, the beast didn't spare a single glance for the female disciples.

The peak lords looked enviously at the newborn little beast, and then reluctantly left. Soon, the Beast Conservatory was quiet. Bai Xiaochun was left alone with the newly born beast and the big black dog, which had also been shoved off to the side by the crowd earlier.

Bai Xiaochun was grinning from ear to ear as he petted the little creature's head. It had the body of a horse, the head of a dragon, black reptilian scales, the clawed feet of a pangolin, and even more shocking, its teeth emanated a seven-colored glow.

As for its solitary horn, it looked just like the Heavenshorn ink dragon's, long and sharp.

If you looked closely, you could find things about it that were similar to other animals. Apparently, things had ended up exactly as Bai Xiaochun wanted; the best parts of countless battle beasts had formed together... into a completely unique and unheard-of living being.

“From now on, you are Bai Xiaochun's battle beast! Don't worry, I'm going to take you everywhere in the cultivation world!”

Laughing, he petted Bruiser's head, who lay there next to him, looking up at him with wide, charming eyes.

The black dog hurried over as well. It always had its guard up, and would never forget its hatred for Bai Xiaochun, but with Bruiser here, its expression was both protective and fearful at the same time.

Bruiser looked over curiously at the dog, and after a moment, seemed to accept it.

Time passed. During the following month, Bai Xiaochun frequently took Bruiser out of the Beast Conservatory on walks around the north bank. He would lead the way, and Bruiser would follow along, looking around curiously at his surroundings.

The black dog would trail behind in secret, watching protectively over Bruiser.

When passing disciples caught sight of Bai Xiaochun, and then Bruiser, their expression were those of amazement, jealousy, and other mixed emotions. Many of the female disciples were immediately taken in by Bruiser's charming appearance.

Bruiser was a little nervous at first, and stuck very closely to Bai Xiaochun, who walked along with his hands clasped proudly behind his back.

"My little Bruiser is beloved by all," he thought. "He gets that

from me.” Clearing his throat, he took Bruiser to many of the crowded places on the north bank. The eyes of so many disciples on him caused his heart to swell with pride and happiness. Sticking his chin up, he took Bruiser here and there, until he was familiar with the whole north bank.

Gradually, Bruiser’s fear and nervousness faded away, and he began to frolic along happily when they went on their walks. However, he tried to keep his chin stuck up in the air, apparently in imitation of Bai Xiaochun. Even the look in his eye was one of loftiness and pride. He almost seemed to be showing off, as if he wasn’t afraid of anything in the world as long as Bai Xiaochun was there.

The sight of it left passing disciples quite shocked. Soon, it became apparent that Bruiser had a strange personality. When he realized people were looking at him, and if he was in a good mood, he would simply start stamping back and forth in irritation. If he was in a bad mood, he would bare his teeth and let out a fierce roar.

During the month that passed, Bruiser grew relatively slowly. However, in terms of his speed, power, and the strength of his bite, whenever he had a chance to show them off, people were completely shocked.

Actually, his speed was on equal footing with the black dog, and he was powerful enough to knock the 30-meter-long pangolin from the Beast Conservatory back a few meters. In terms of intelligence, he had already reached a shocking level. He was now as smart as a teenaged human, and in many ways, even smarter than that.

To Bai Xiaochun's delight, Bruiser was adept at controlling fire. Furthermore, the flames which emanated from his feet grew more intense, especially when he was moving quickly. The flames were currently black, like the fires of the underworld.

Because of his fantastic nature, and his charming appearance and wide eyes, even the elders and peak lords doted on Bruiser. They would often send over gifts of spirit medicines and foods suitable for battle beasts.

However, as Bruiser grew older, Bai Xiaochun discovered something very odd. There was... an eccentric strangeness to his personality....

Currently, Xu Song was standing on the path up ahead of Bai Xiaochun, looking at Bruiser, who was roaring at him, all the scales on his body standing on end, black flames surging out beneath his feet. Xu Song was shocked; all he had done was look over at Bruiser, who had almost instantly lost his temper and seemed to be on the verge of biting him.

"Bai Xiaochun," he said, annoyed, "your battle beast is...." But then he thought about how much the elders and peak lord doted upon Bruiser, and he backed up a few steps. Before he could even finish speaking, Gongsun Wan'er appeared, coming from the other direction. Bruiser, who had just been baring his fangs and brandishing his claws, looked over at Gongsun Wan'er, and his eyes glittered. Looking more charming than ever, he eagerly rushed over toward her.



He began to follow alongside her as she walked, yipping meekly and wagging his tail like a dog. When he brushed up against her leg, she smiled, then knelt down and picked him up in her arms. Bruiser's eyes shone brightly as he buried himself in Gongsun Wan'er's chest and wriggled around back and forth. Gongsun Wan'er laughed, and from the expression on Bruiser's little face, he was clearly enjoying himself.

Xu Song's eyes went wide, and Bai Xiaochun chuckled wryly. During the past half month or so, he had noticed that Bruiser would always bare his fangs at the male disciples, seemingly ready to bite them without hesitation if they touched him. However, when it came to the female disciples, he would always act very charming and couldn't wait to be held in their embrace.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure why this was, and could only attribute it to Bruiser's bloodline. The only explanation that made sense was that he had inherited this hobby somehow.

This behavior only continued to intensify, to the point where it was a bit preposterous. Bruiser would treat the male and female disciples completely differently. The male disciples were left speechless, and many of them even began to envy Bruiser. As for the female disciples, he had already rubbed up against more than half of them....

If that were all there were to the matter, it might not have been a big deal. But soon, Bai Xiaochun went into secluded meditation to break through to the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation. During that time, Bruiser's hobbies changed. The black dog would often take it to the places on the north bank

where the female disciples would bathe, and they would look on in secret.

The black dog only found it mildly interesting, but Bruiser quickly grew addicted. Eventually, he became familiar with the bathing routines of the female disciples, and would excitedly rush out of the Beast Conservatory in the morning, and wouldn't return until the sky was dark.

It was hard to say how many female disciples he could see bathing during a full day....

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was focused on his secluded meditation, and the advancement of his cultivation base, so he didn't pay much attention to what was happening.

Another month passed, and Bruiser's habits changed yet again. In addition to being held in the close embrace of the female disciples, and secretly watching them bathe, he developed a new taste.... When watching the female disciples bathe, he would secretly take away their [bras](#)... and then hide them in a safe location.

The undergarment referred to here is a “dudou,” a traditional Chinese bra that more resembles a bodice than a modern bra

Eventually, the female disciples realized that a lot of their bras were going missing, and it reached the point where virtually all of them had experienced such a thing.

Of course, Bruiser was very fast, and the black dog was also there

to keep watch. Therefore, during its month of bra-stealing activities, not a single clue was left behind. Considering how cute Bruiser was, not a single female disciple ever suspected him.

“A sex maniac has appeared on the north bank! He specializes in stealing the female disciples’ bras!!”

“Dammit! It’s definitely some sex fiend. Junior Sister Sun has already lost ten bras!!”

“I already did some looking into the matter, and according to my calculations, several thousand bras have already gone missing. This person really has some unique taste. He isn’t destroying them, he’s collecting them! Find him! We definitely have to find him!”

The situation with the missing bras got worse and worse. Eventually, the female disciples joined forces in their anger, and began to scour the entire north bank for clues. They even got assistance from the battle squirrel of one of the elders from Archway Peak, who was adept at performing searches. The entire north bank was under intense scrutiny, and even many male disciples joined the effort, filled with righteous indignation.

They searched all four mountain peaks, as well as many other locations. Eventually, someone suggested going to the Beast Conservatory.

Before long, a horde of disciples was making their way in that very direction.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was in the honor guard station, fully focused on his meditation, reveling in the wonderful feeling of his cultivation base rising.

## Chapter 139: I Didn't Do It!

---

It was at about this time that a hubbub of voices rose up outside the honor guard station. Confused, Bai Xiaochun pushed open the door, and saw a host of north bank disciples congregated outside of the spell formation.

He edged backward, his face flickering as he tried to figure out what he might have done to cause something like this. However, even after a long moment of thought, he had no clue what might have gotten the north bank into such a commotion.

Despite not being sure what was going on, he started to get nervous, and immediately called out “What are you people doing?!”

Instantly, the disciples locked their gazes on him standing there on the other side of the spell formation.

“Sect Uncle Bai, please open the spell formation so we can come inside and perform a search!”

“We’re not just searching here, we’re searching everywhere on the north bank.”

“During the past month, a lot of female disciples have had their bras go missing. A sex maniac is on the loose! If you’re innocent, then there’s no reason not to open the spell formation and let us perform a search!”

“Hmph. Even if they’re hidden in a bag of holding, we have our ways of finding them!”

Bai Xiaochun sighed, and immediately felt a lot better. In fact, he even started to get a bit angry. Claspng his hands behind his back, he looked out at the north bank disciples.

For once, he knew that was on the side of right, and there was no way he would just give in to their demands so easily. Looking out with righteous anger, he said, “Quit making such a scene! I’m a Prestige disciple, the Junior Brother of the sect leader, I would never do something like that!”

“It was definitely you! In all the north bank, you’re the only person who could do something like this!”

“That’s right! Bai Xiaochun is the most suspicious of all. He already secretly took other disciples’ battle beasts away for contributions. That’s the perfect example to show how skilled he is! The Junior and Elder Sisters’ bras were all stolen without anyone detecting a single thing!”

Looking at the clamoring crowd, Bai Xiaochun chuckled coldly and then waved his sleeve, opening the spell formation.

“Very well, then. You may enter and perform your search. When you come up empty-handed in a few moments, I’ll be very curious to see how you’ll compensate me for this little charade!” Bai Xiaochun felt utterly calm, and completely in the right.

His pure and unwavering confidence got many in the crowd to doubt their suspicious. After all, they had absolutely no evidence to support their claim; then, Bai Xiaochun suddenly opened the spell formation. At first they just stood there exchanging awkward glances, but then the female disciples whose bras had been stolen gritted their teeth and stepped inside. First they clasped hands toward Bai Xiaochun, then began to search around. One of the female disciples even procured a crimson squirrel from her bag of beast raising.

The instant the squirrel appeared, it let out a high-pitched shriek and burst into motion. Everyone in the crowd was taken aback. During the past several days of searching for the missing bras, they had relied on this special squirrel to help them. It had a very acute sense of smell, and would be able to detect even the slightest whiff of its target, even if it were in a bag of holding.

Moments ago, many in the crowd had been wavering in their determination, but now their eyes went wide, and they rushed into the area protected by the spell formation. Bai Xiaochun looked on blankly, truly confused by what was happening. He also followed along with the crowd, until the squirrel reached one of the side rooms in the honor guard station. When the door was pushed open, a whooshing sound could be heard as a cascade of brightly colored bras of all types spilled out, thousands of them....

“Bai Xiaochun!! Are you still gonna try to convince us you didn’t do it!?”

“So, it was you after all!!”

“Bai Xiaochun, y-y-you... you are so completely shameless!!”

As for the male disciples in the crowd, their rage burned particularly hot.

Bai Xiaochun gasped, and instantly began to shiver.

“Impossible!!” he shrieked.

Even as the words left his mouth, the female disciples’ gazes came to fall upon him, and they seemed to contain bloody murder. Bai Xiaochun’s scalp went numb, and he immediately tried to offer an explanation.

“I really didn’t do it! I had no idea those were there....” Swallowing hard, he began to back up, feeling more wronged than ever. He really wasn’t sure how to explain the situation. The female disciples were glaring at him furiously, and some of them were even starting to perform incantation gestures, as if they were going to attack him right on the spot.

“Dammit, what’s going on!?” he thought, feeling like he was going mad. He had spent all his recent time in secluded meditation, focused completely on cultivation. He hadn’t even left the honor guard station, nor had he even opened the door to the side room. It was at that point that he looked out and noticed Bruiser running along, holding a red bra between his teeth, looking intoxicated.



However, before he reached the spell formation, Bruiser suddenly stopped in his tracks. When he saw the mob that had formed, he quickly dropped the red bra.

At that same moment, countless eyes turned to look in his direction.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he immediately felt a headache coming on. After all, no other disciple could go in and out of the spell formation while Bai Xiaochun was in secluded meditation.

Not even the big black dog could do that. The only one who could freely enter or exit the spell formation was... Bruiser!

Bruiser began to tremble, not out of fear of the anger of the other disciples, but because he feared getting Bai Xiaochun mad. Bruiser seemed to be on the verge of tears as he prostrated himself on the ground and began to whimper.

Strange expressions appeared on the faces of the disciples in the mob. As for the female disciples, they almost couldn't believe their eyes. Inside and outside the honor guard station, everything was completely silent.

After a long moment passed, one of the female disciples murmured, "Bruiser wouldn't do something like this. He's so cute! Someone must have put him up to it!"

Immediately, people began to echo her words.

“Yeah! Bruiser is way too charming and pure. Someone must have put a spell on him and forced him to do it!”

“It was Bai Xiaochun! He’s Bruiser’s master!”

It didn’t take long before almost all of the female disciples were convinced, and looked over angrily at Bai Xiaochun. Although some people knew the truth, Bruiser was normally so cute, and currently looked so scared, that he had won over the hearts of all present.

However, the situation was simply too odd, so those disciples didn’t say anything. Instead of causing any further trouble, the disciples glared at Bai Xiaochun, then made their way off.

Soon, things quieted down again, and Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and stared up into the sky, looking like he was about to cry. Considering the blank look in his eyes, Bruiser knew that he had made a mistake; he quietly slunk over to Bai Xiaochun and started rubbing up against his legs.

Bai Xiaochun sighed and knelt down to pat his head. “Bruiser... you’re usually so smart. How could you have been so dumb this time? You, you... you can steal bras if you want, but you can’t screw me over in the process. I created you! I’m kind of like your father. You definitely can’t screw your father over!”

“Okay, remember, don’t screw over the people who are close to you.... As for all those bras, hiding them in that room isn’t gonna

work. You can't hide stuff like that in your own home! Silly Bruiser! You have to be a bit smarter! Think things out ahead of time, and make sure you don't get caught." Bruiser bowed his head and whimpered a bit, aware of his mistake.

Seeing him act in such a way softened Bai Xiaochun's heart, and he decided not to reprimand him any further. With that, he returned to the honor guard station, a bit down, but just as focused on meditation and cultivation.

Outside in the courtyard, Bruiser lay there whimpering for a bit. But then, a fierce look appeared in his eyes as he glared off in the direction of the north bank disciples.

When the night was dark, he crawled to his feet and then vanished, headed out to the north bank.

The following morning, as the first rays of dawn were just beginning to spread out, a miserable shrieks could be heard coming from one of the disciples' residences.

"Dammit! Who was it? Who stole my Beast Spirit Pill!? I had a hard time getting my hands on that pill! I was gonna give it to my battle beast to advance his level!!"

As soon as the cry rang out, more similar cries could be heard.

"Aghhh! My Myriad Spirit Grass! I've been growing it for five years, and now the only things left are the roots! Gone. All gone...."

Somebody ate it up!”

“A thief! This is unbelievable! All of the battle beast food in my immortal’s cave is gone! That was three years’ worth of food!”

“Heavens! It was just yesterday that I finally got that third order bloodline beast bone from Elder Li! I was going to extract the bloodline power from it, but now it’s gone. Gone!!”

Similar cries could be heard in both the Outer and Inner Sects. In the end, several hundred people were crying out in anger. Without exception, all of them were male, and all of them had been to the honor guard station the day before.

As they cried out in pain and anger, they suddenly caught sight of Bruiser, running along with a blood-colored bone in his mouth, crushing it to pieces.

A miserable scream rose up from one disciple. His hair was disheveled, and his eyes bloodshot as he wept, seemingly crazed.

“Noooo! I borrowed that third order bloodline beast bone from an Elder! Agghhhh. Don’t eat it....”

Crunch crunch.

Holding his head proudly, Bruiser was a blur that none of the disciples could even come close to catching. Speeding off into the distance, he continued to munch on the bone until it was gone.

The disciple with the disheveled hair started to grow faint at the thought of Elder Li's rage when he didn't return the bone. With a howl of fury, he shot off after Bruiser.

He wasn't the only one. Hundreds of enraged disciples began to chase Bruiser, and yet, none of them were fast enough. They could only watch with wide eyes as he sped toward Irispetal Peak. Even as the crowd chased after him, a cold snort suddenly echoed out like thunder.

The peak lord of Irispetal Peak, the old woman, appeared. Coldly staring at the hundreds of disciples, she said, "What shocking behavior! Look at all of you, scaring poor little Bruiser half to death! Seems to me you people need something better to do to occupy your time!"

The disciples shivered and clasped hands in greeting. As for Bruiser, he cowered behind the old lady, looking very charming with his wide eyes as he rubbed against her leg.

The disciples raged inwardly, but none of them dared to say a single thing. Their hatred for Bruiser continued to rise to new heights.

"So what if he ate a few things here and there?" the old woman continued. "Big deal! Whatever he ate, I'll compensate for. Now get out of here and stop bullying Bruiser!" After giving the disciples a final glare, the old woman looked down kindly at Bruiser and pet him on the head. Bruiser responded by looking even more charming than usual. He even licked her hand like a puppy might.

The disciples could only grit their teeth in their anger. In their minds, they weren't bullying Bruiser, he was bullying them!

However, considering that a peak lord was siding with him, there was nothing they could do. They could only swallow their anger and give up any thoughts of causing any trouble. Of course, their fury was quickly transplanted onto Bai Xiaochun.

"It's all Bai Xiaochun's fault. He's the one who created this abominable battle beast!"

"This battle beast is repulsive! Fine. Steal bras. Pilfer our food. The female disciples are the same as the elders and the peak lords. They spoil that thing to death!"

In the middle of his meditation, Bai Xiaochun suddenly sneezed. Opening his eyes, he looked around for a moment before going back to his breathing exercises. As for his cultivation base, it was inching ever closer to the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation.

# Chapter 140: Foundation Establishment

## Holy Land

---

Another month passed, and Bruiser's behavior only continued to get worse. The male disciples that had provoked Bai Xiaochun in the past were all going crazy, and yet, were completely incapable of doing anything about the situation.

That was around the time that Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base eventually entered the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation. Apparently, he had reached a barrier that would be very difficult to pass.

“The only thing left is Foundation Establishment!” he thought, taking a deep breath, his eyes shining with anticipation. Foundation Establishment was divided into a few different types: Mortalstring, Earthstring, and the legendary Heavenstring, all of which added different amounts of longevity, to be specific, 100 years, 200 years, and 500 years respectively.

Bai Xiaochun had never even considered the possibility of reaching Heavenstring Foundation Establishment, considering there was almost no chance of it happening. In the entire 10,000 year history of the Spirit Stream Sect, only a handful of people had ever reached Heavenstring Foundation Establishment, and had only done so by randomly acquiring some heavenstring energy.

“Generally speaking, most people reach Mortalstring, which requires a Foundation Establishment Pill. Earthstring Foundation Establishment requires earthstring energy.... Of course, even Earthstring Foundation Establishment is divided up into strong

and weak. It all depends on the very moment of reaching Foundation Establishment, and how many Tideflows occur within one's spiritual sea! At the very least there will be one, and at the most, nine!

“And then there's my fleshly body power. I'm already at the point of being able to make contact with the first shackle. Whether I make a breakthrough with my Undying Gold Skin, or use the power of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture, I should be able to break through that shackle. If I break through with both of those methods, who knows how powerful I'll be!?” From what Bai Xiaochun remembered, Foundation Establishment Pills could be purchased with merit points from the sect. They came at a hefty price, but considering how much he had saved up, he could afford them if he wanted. But he wasn't willing to do such a thing. After all, Mortalstring Foundation Establishment, also known as Mortal-Dao, only added 100 years of longevity.

After some more thought, Bai Xiaochun produced a transmission jade slip and then sent a message to Li Qinghou asking for some more information about earthstring energy.

It didn't take long before the jade slip lit up with soft light as Li Qinghou returned his message. Bai Xiaochun immediately sent some spiritual power into the jade slip, whereupon Li Qinghou's voice began to echo in his mind.

“I'd originally planned to wait a bit longer before telling you this, but in three months, 150 people from the north bank and 100 people from the south bank, all of them Inner Sect disciples in the tenth level of Qi Condensation, will gather at the grand hall on



Mount Daoseed.

“The reason is that the three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands will be opened. As for you, you will be going to the Fallen Sword Abyss, where you will compete with everyone else to acquire earthstring energy, and then use it to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment. If you succeed, you will acquire an additional 200 years of longevity. That will be a major step for you as you pursue your dream of living forever!”

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun as he looked at the jade slip, panting.

“Earthstring Foundation Establishment can add 200 years of longevity!!” His eyes glittered with longing for a moment, but then he hesitated. “Competing with everyone else will definitely involve fierce fighting....

“But that’s 200 years we’re talking about!” He continued to struggle with the matter, his obsession with being able to live forever causing his eyes to rapidly become bloodshot.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t the only Chosen to be given advance notice about what was to come, so soon, the news about the three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands being opened spread throughout the north and south banks.

The three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands were the Fallen Sword Abyss, the Lone Hell Pocket Realm, and the Primordial Spirit Hollow. Once per sixty-year-cycle, they would be

simultaneously opened, and that time was now at hand.

Of course, the Spirit Stream Sect wasn't the only sect qualified to send people into the three Holy Lands. All four of the strongest sects in the cultivation world of the eastern Lower Reaches would send disciples. The Spirit Stream Sect was only one of those four major sects.

The Fallen Sword Abyss was considered the best of the three Holy Lands, with the Lone Hell Pocket Realm and the Primordial Spirit Hollow being secondary. The reason for the Holy Lands being ranked in that way was that, according to the legends, the Fallen Sword Abyss contained a strand of heavenstring energy.

These legends had been around for a long time, but on all the occasions in which the Fallen Sword Abyss had been opened, never once had anyone acquired any heavenstring energy.

The competition for earthstring energy would be a blood-soaked fight in which only the fittest survived!

The discussions about the three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands spread far and wide on both the north and south banks. All of the Inner Sect disciples in the tenth level of Qi Condensation were talking about it with complete and utter excitement.

“It's definitely going to be bloody carnage in there. Of the people who qualify to compete for Earthstring Foundation Establishment, quite a few die.... By the way, I heard that for the first time, the four sects are all going to be formally competing against each

other. The number of people from a given sect who succeed in reaching Earthstring Foundation Establishment will affect how many people get sent in the next time.”

“Ah, this isn’t fair! The difference between Mortalstring and Earthstring is huge. Earthstring Foundation Establishment can totally crush Mortalstring. They’re on completely different levels.”

Of course, there were some who got nervous because of the stories about the violent and bloody fighting which went on inside. Some of them preferred the safety of Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment over the additional hundreds of years of longevity, and the glory of being able to crush people below them.

Three months later at dawn, the solemn tolling of bells could be heard on Mount Daoseed. The seven peak lords of the mountain peaks flew through the air with dignified expressions on their faces, each one of them followed by dozens of disciples.

Everywhere else in the sect, disciples looked up to watch the people flying through the air toward Mount Daoseed. All of those people were so well-known that the other disciples could identify them by name.

From the north bank came Beihan Lie, Xu Song, Gongsun Wan’er, Beihan Feng, Gongsun Yun, and in the lead position, surrounded by swirling black mist, Ghostfang....

A similar scene could be seen on the south bank, as the disciples of Green Crest Peak, Fragrant Cloud Peak, and Violet Cauldron

Peak all looked excitedly up into the air. Xu Baocai was among them, eagerly clutching a notebook to record everything that was happening.

Shangguan Tianyou was clearly more powerful than he had been in the past. He looked like an unsheathed sword, glittering with blinding light as he flew along. Zhou Xinqi was surrounded by a swirling blue glow and a powerful life force.

There was also Lu Tianlei, who was like a thunderbolt that could rip apart the heavens. In addition to them were other long time Inner Sect disciples, all of whom wore solemn expressions as they followed the three south bank peak lords.

The elders of both banks, as well as other qualified disciples, were all discussing the matter.

“The north bank gets 150 people and the south bank gets 100. I wonder how many of them will rise to the top in the fighting with the other three sects, and eventually reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment? Of course, some of them will never return.... The path of cultivation is soaked with blood, and is ruled by the law of the jungle.”

“I heard one of the Senior members of my clan say that whenever the three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands are opened, there’s always blood and carnage. To some people, the main point isn’t reaching Foundation Establishment, its killing the members of the other three sects. It’s like a war between the Four Great Sects that comes around once every sixty-year-cycle!”

“But why are we just sending our Chosen to be killed? I know that earthstring energy can’t be stored up and used later, but Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment is so much safer. It might be weaker, but at least there wouldn’t be so many deaths....”

“Hmph. If you have one generation filled with weaklings, then everyone after them will also be weaklings. If that happened, the Spirit Stream Sect would definitely be wiped out sooner or later!”

“None of the Four Great Sects will avoid the fighting, not as long as they have even one disciple who they think can reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment. If one generation of disciples is weak, then the sect’s power in the area will weaken, and outer forces would become a big threat. It would cause a huge headache!”

“A perfect example is the Pill Stream Sect. Long ago, they avoided the fighting three times in a row. But then their overall battle prowess dropped. After that, powerful warlords rose up in the sect’s territory and started establishing their own little fiefdoms. Our Spirit Stream Sect even managed to occupy about twenty percent of their former territory. Their hand was forced, and after joining the fighting again, they managed to get some Earthstring Foundation Establishment disciples. Of course, a lot of other disciples died in the process, but at least they were able to get things back to the status quo.”

Soon, the disciples from both banks were landing outside the grand hall on Mount Daoseed, led by their respective peak lords. Everyone had very solemn expressions on their faces.

All of the disciples were aware that their next destination would be one filled with both opportunity, and bloodshed!

They looked around at each other, measuring each other up. Soon, everyone was shocked to find that one certain person was missing.

“Bai Xiaochun isn’t coming?”

They weren’t the only ones to be surprised. The seven peak lords stood there thoughtfully, looking in the direction of the Beast Conservatory on the north bank. Li Qinghou’s expression was the same as ever. He was confident in his analysis of Bai Xiaochun, and was sure that although he was naughty, mischievous, and fearful of death, his obsession with living forever would win out in the end.

In the Beast Conservatory, Bai Xiaochun sat there listening to the bells ringing. After a long moment of thought, he gritted his teeth and rose to his feet. During the past three months, he had focused completely on cultivation. He had spent massive amounts of merit points to get over a thousand paper amulets, leaving him armed to the teeth. He had also worked hard to achieve a breakthrough with his Undying Silver Skin; unfortunately, although he made some progress, he never achieved the breakthrough.

His bags were packed, and he was ready to go. He refused to allow Bruiser to come along, as he wasn’t ready for such an event. Stepping onto the Golden Crow Sword, he shot through the air

toward Mount Daoseed. On the way, he stopped by the Spirit Stone Pavilion, where he spent some more merit points on earthflame crystals, which he could use as a substitute for actual earthflame, and be able to concoct medicine anywhere he wanted.

At the moment, his eyes were completely bloodshot. Although he had made his decision quite some time ago, he always liked to be absolutely prepared. Therefore, he had spent a lot of time pouring through the ancient records, and had learned about how brutal and bloody the Foundation Establishment Holy Lands were. He also knew that it was a chance for the sects to show off their might to the others.

The more he came to understand the whole thing, the more his heart trembled. That was especially true when he read about how 800 years ago, only about ten disciples returned to the Spirit Stream Sect from the Fallen Sword Abyss. The brutality of that event left Bai Xiaochun completely shaken.

Of course, that was an isolated incident. According to the records, the barbarity of that instance 800 years in the past was because a terrifying Chosen rose up from the Blood Stream Sect. He was known as Master Limitless, and he crushed everything in his path. It wasn't just the Spirit Stream Sect who suffered heavy casualties; all of the other three sects did. Virtually all of the disciples of that generation in the other three sects were wiped out, and that was how the Blood Stream Sect had surpassed the Profound Stream Sect to become the top force among the Four Great Sects.

As for that Master Limitless, he was now known as Patriarch

Limitless of the Blood Stream Sect.

On the other occasions in which the three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands were opened, the casualties weren't so horrific. At the very most, half of the disciples might die. Even for those who didn't reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment, as long as they were careful, it was possible to make it out alive.

Even still, a casualty rate of fifty percent left Bai Xiaochun shaking in fear. He really wanted to pass up the opportunity, and simply settle for the safe bet of Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment and its extra hundred years of longevity.

However, his dream was not to live for an extra hundred years. He wanted... to live forever!!

"I want more than a hundred years. I want forever!" After looking through the ancient records, he left with bloodshot eyes, even more clear about how Foundation Establishment worked. The most telling factor was that from ancient times until now, not a single Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivator had ever reached the Gold Core stage!

If he wanted to cultivate all the way to Gold Core, he had to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment!

Even the lowest level of the Gold Core stage added far more longevity than Foundation Establishment. Obviously, the higher one's cultivation base, the greater one's chances of living forever.



“I could avoid this situation, but a hundred years later... how could I possibly avoid dying? At that time, wouldn't I regret not taking the chance to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment?” During the past three months, Bai Xiaochun had wrestled with the problem over and over again. In the end, he reached a state of bedeviled madness. Gritting his teeth, he finally made his decision.

“I'll do anything to be able to live forever!!” he shouted as he stepped onto the Golden Crow Sword and shot toward Mount Daoseed. Shortly after the other disciples converged, he appeared.

# Chapter 141: Fallen Sword Abyss!

---

Bai Xiaochun's arrival attracted quite a bit of attention. Everyone looked over at him, including Shangguan Tianyou, Zhou Xinqi, Lu Tianlei, Beihan Lie, Xu Song, Gongsun Wan'er, Gongsun Yun, Hou Yunfei... and Ghostfang!

An encouraging look slowly appeared in Li Qinghou's eyes.

Bai Xiaochun hurried up to Li Qinghou, then clasped hands and bowed deeply.

Li Qinghou could see how bloodshot his eyes were, and knew it must have been quite a struggle to convince himself to come.

"Stand behind me," he said.

Bai Xiaochun straightened up and hurried over to stand behind Li Qinghou. Looking around, he caught sight of Hou Yunfei, whom he hadn't seen since being transferred to the north bank. During the time they had been apart, Hou Yunfei participated in an Inner Sect trial by fire. After becoming an Inner Sect disciple, he benefited from the assistance of his clan, soaring all the way to the tenth level of Qi Condensation.

Their eyes met, and Hou Yunfei nodded encouragingly. Bai Xiaochun nodded back. There was no time for chatting, though, as the main doors of the grand hall were already opening.

As they did, Zheng Yuandong's voice echoed out from inside.

“The origins of the Primordial Spirit Hollow are unknown. Long ago, before the existence of the Lone Hell Pocket Realm, it was the only location in the eastern Lower Reaches where earthstring energy gathered. Countless wars were fought outside the spirit hollow, until three powerful sects controlled it. When the Spirit Stream Sect rose to power, it came to be under the control of the Four Great Sects!

“The Lone Hell Pocket Realm suddenly appeared 10,000 years ago in the Hellwood Continent. It's a barren wasteland without a single living thing inside other than the earthstring banebeasts. Many wars were fought over that location as well, until the Four Great Sects occupied it and chose to share it as the second of the Foundation Establishment Holy Lands.

“The Fallen Sword Abyss traces its origins back to 5,000 years ago, when an indescribably enormous sword fell from beyond the heavens. It is huge, larger than a hundred Spirit Stream Sects put together, and contains terrifying power. It pierced through the canopy above, plummeting down to stab into the ground near Mount [Flamecrane](#), sending sword qi all the way down into the underworld. As for the body of the sword itself, it is permeated with earthstring energy.

“Because of that, the inside of the sword is much like the other two Foundation Establishment Holy Lands; it is filled with countless earthstring banebeasts. Kill them to collect earthstring energy, and when you have enough, you can form it into an earthstring capture crystal, to summon the latent earthstring

energy present within the Fallen Sword Abyss!

“According to the investigations and analyses of the Four Great Sects, when the sword fell from beyond the heavens, it absorbed a bit of Heaven-Dao aura, which means that there may be a bit of heavenstring energy within it!

“Of course, Heavenstring Foundation Establishment is also called Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!” At this point, Zheng Yuandong paused for a moment, and looked out at the crowd, his eyes sparkling as if with lightning.

“The path of cultivation is cramped and narrow; the only way to walk it is to tread upon countless corpses. Only then can you have a chance to make contact with... a supreme great Dao!

“During this Foundation Establishment trial by fire.... all of you must do your best to kill the disciples of the other three sects. After all, it is a trial by fire, but also a war between the four sects, and even more importantly, directly related to the destiny of the Spirit Stream Sect. I will reveal more to you about that upon your return!

“I have no doubt in my mind that the disciples of the other three sects will do their best to kill you. In the Foundation Establishment Holy Lands, the chance to reach Foundation Establishment is not presented to everyone! Resources are limited; this is a competition for a great Dao!” Zheng Yuandong swished his sleeve as his thunderous voice echoed out in all directions. All of the more than 200 Inner Sect disciples present responded with a confident cheer.

“This Foundation Establishment trial by fire will be presided over by the peak lord from Irispetal Peak, the peak lord from Violet Cauldron Peak, and Ouyang Jie from the Hall of Justice. They have already made all the necessary arrangements. 100 disciples will enter the Fallen Sword Abyss, while two groups of 75 will go to the Lone Hell Pocket Realm and the Primordial Spirit Hollow. And now, activate the grand spell formation which leads to the Foundation Establishment Holy Lands!”

Soon, intense rumbling sounds could be heard as a huge spell formation opened up, and the group of over 200 disciples slowly faded away. Outside of the spell formation, Li Qinghou stood there with an expression of anticipation and anxiety on his face. He felt like he was looking at a young eagle spreading its wings. Down below was a bottomless pit, and off in the distance, the sun was just beginning to rise.

Mount Flamecrane was located on the Righteouscraft Continent, and long ago, had risen as high as the heavens. Back then, it had been taller than any of the mountain peaks in the Spirit Stream Sect, and in fact, bigger than the entire Spirit Stream Sect in general.

But now, things were different. More than half of the mountain had been destroyed, and the lands stretching far and wide around it had all been reduced to a barren wasteland that filled nearly half of the Righteouscraft Continent.

Neither mortals nor beasts could survive in such conditions, and even cultivators who spent too much time there would eventually experience shocking deaths. They would spontaneously explode,

whereupon streams of scattered sword qi would billow out from their destroyed corpses.

The reason for all of that was the enormous sword which had fallen from the heavens. It was an ancient sword, its surface carved with countless magical symbols, which were in varying states of erosion. The sword was stabbed halfway into the ground directly in front of Mount Flamecrane. Crevices spread out from the sword in all directions, the narrowest being a few meters wide, the largest being thirty or more meters across. The crevices themselves were pitch black, and pulsed with intense coldness.

The entire surface of the ground around the sword was covered by a glittering shield, which prevented anyone from entering.

The sword was enormous; even the portion of the blade that was visible, along with the hilt, rose up far higher than Mount Flamecrane. If the sword were compared to the size of a hand, then the mountain would be like an ant.

Of course, when you compared the cultivators to the mountain, the mountain was like the hand and the cultivators standing at its summit were like ants.

Two sects had already assembled at the top of Mount Flamecrane. One group contained 80 disciples, and the other, 100. Both were led by Foundation Establishment cultivators, who were currently engaged in idle chatting. The two groups of disciples, on the other hand, were staring at each other with open hostility.

On the left-hand side was the group of 80 disciples. They all wore white robes, the sleeves of which were embroidered with the image of a medicinal pill. Furthermore, the entire group emanated a medicinal aroma.

They were none other than the Pill Stream Sect!

Opposite them was the group of 100 disciples. They wore deep blue robes, and emanated profound cultivation base fluctuations. If you looked closely at some of the disciples, it was possible to see that certain parts of their bodies rippled and blurred in strange ways.

They were none other than the Profound Stream Sect!

Even as the two parties measured each other up, the clouds up above began to churn, and countless magical symbols appeared. At first, they flickered back and forth between the shape of a cauldron and the shape of a sword, but in the end, they resembled an enormous ink dragon, roaring at the top of its lungs.

The leader of the group from the Pill Stream Sect was a middle-aged woman. Looking up with glittering eyes, she murmured, "The Spirit Stream Sect is here."

The cultivator leading the Profound Stream Sect was an old man with numerous oddly bulging protrusions on his face that gave him a very sinister appearance. The pupils of his eyes were vertical like a cat's, and every time he blinked, anyone who was looking him would be filled with a very bizarre sensation. Currently, he

was looking at the Spirit Stream Sect's spell formation forming up above.

Before long, a beam of light shot down and landed in another area of Mount Flamecrane. More than a hundred people slowly materialized, with Ouyang Jie at the front. When the woman from the Pill Stream Sect and the old man from the Profound Stream Sect saw him, their faces flickered with surprise.

“Daoist Jackal!”

Ouyang Jie chuckled in a grating voice and then said, “Fellow Daoist Hai. Fellow Daoist Lin. Long time no see.”

After all of the disciples materialized, he waved his hand, dispelling the protective shield created by the spell formation. With that, he stepped forward.

As the Foundation Establishment cultivators began to confer, Bai Xiaochun rubbed his eyes and looked around, feeling a bit dazed. The sight of the enormous sword left him gasping. Looking up, he realized that he couldn't even see the end of the hilt; it disappeared into the clouds above. It was a very shocking sight indeed.

Light gasps could be heard around him as other Spirit Stream Sect disciples also looked up in shock at the huge sword.

It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun noticed that there were a lot less people around him. Two hundred had been gathered upon



their departure, but now there were only a hundred people with him.

Zhou Xinqi was nowhere to be seen, nor was Lu Tianlei. However, Shangguan Tianyou, Ghostfang, Beihan Lie, Gongsun Wan'er, and Hou Yunfei were all present in the crowd, all of whom were currently studying the shocking sword in front of them.

It didn't take long, though, before they all started to sit down cross-legged and produce jade slips. After pouring some spiritual power into the slips, they then began to study the disciples from the Pill Stream Sect and the Profound Stream Sect.

Likewise, the disciples from the other sects turned to look at the newcomers. Quite a few disciples were looking at Bai Xiaochun. The expressions of the faces of the disciples differed from group to group when they saw Bai Xiaochun. Those from the Pill Stream Sect seemed skeptical, as if they didn't quite believe what they had heard about him. As for the Profound Stream Sect, they wore looks of derision.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised by all this. Moments later, Hou Yunfei approached and handed him a jade slip.

"You showed up late," he said quietly. "Before you came, the peak lords and Ouyang Jie explained the bitter struggle we'll face in more detail. They said that the best way to stay safe was to kill as many disciples from the other sects as possible. They also gave us jade slips with information about the Fallen Sword Abyss, as well as the disciples of the other sects. Presumably, the other sects have information about us too."

Bai Xiaochun took the jade slip and poured some spiritual power into it. The first thing he saw was a detailed introduction to the Fallen Sword Abyss.

The Fallen Sword Abyss was also called the Fallen Sword World, and had descended from above several thousand years in the past. More than half of the sword was buried deep in the earth. The sword itself formed a tilted world, the depths of which were filled with increasingly powerful earthstring beasts, whose bodies contained large amounts of earthstring energy.

The entrances to the Fallen Sword World were the numerous subterranean holes which had been punctured into the body of the sword during its fall.

Within the world of the sword, there were not only earthstring banebeasts formed from earthstring energy, there were also banesouls. Many people believed that they were the souls of people slain by the sword, who materialized due to the presence of the earthstring energy. Although they did not possess the same battle prowess they had before death, they were still dangerous. Thankfully, they weren't intelligent, and wouldn't take the initiative to attack.

When Bai Xiaochun read about that, he took a deep breath and resolved to pay close attention to the banesouls. As far as he was concerned, they were basically the same thing as evil ghosts.

The jade slip also provided detailed information about

earthstring energy. Essentially, there were two types of earthstring energy. One was the type in the banebeasts. When a banebeast was killed, it would release some faint earthstring energy, which could be collected into a Dao bottle and transformed into an earthstring capture crystal. That crystal was like a key which could unlock the method to collecting the second type of earthstring energy. The truth was that ninety-nine percent of the earthstring energy was fused with the world itself, and couldn't be collected directly. It had to be summoned!

The amount of earthstring energy in the world was limited. Upon reaching Foundation Establishment, a certain number of spiritual sea Tideflows would occur depending on the latent talent possessed by a given individual. Because of that, the earlier one reached Foundation Establishment, the better. Every person who actually reached Foundation Establishment would reduce the total amount of earthstring energy within the Fallen Sword World. Generally speaking, unless some incredible disciple came along who achieved eight Tideflows, there would be enough earthstring energy for thirty people to reach Foundation Establishment.

Those who reached Foundation Establishment sooner rather than later had a huge advantage. If someone was too slow, it would become difficult to absorb enough earthstring energy to cause a Tideflow, thus making it impossible to reach Foundation Establishment.

This "Flamecrane" is a type of bird from Chinese mythology. I couldn't find any good articles about it in English. According to the Baidu article I found, it represents an omen of imminent destruction. The name of the bird in Chinese "bi fang" supposedly comes from the sound of burning wood or bamboo. The bird somewhat resembles a [red-crowned crane](#), except that it has one leg, blue feathers, red spots, and a white bill. Whenever it appears,

it means that fiery destruction will soon occur.

## Chapter 142: A Host Of Chosen!

---

After finishing with the introduction of the Fallen Sword Abyss, Bai Xiaochun felt more than ever that the place was profoundly dangerous. Frowning, he went on to peruse the numerous images of the various disciples from the other three sects. As he did, he would occasionally look up to identify that disciple within the crowd and make a quick comparison.

The more he learned about the disciples of these sects, the more jumpy he got.

“Zhao Rou from the Pill Stream Sect, adept with illusion forms. She once simultaneously fought three disciples in the same cultivation stage, and slaughtered them all! Wow, so incredible! Her abilities seem on par with Gongsun Wan’er’s illusion magic.” Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and then looked furtively over at a young woman in the Pill Stream Sect group. She was incredibly beautiful, with soft, supple skin. Currently, she was staring into the eyes of Gongsun Wan’er; clearly, the two of them were already measuring each other up.

“Lei Shan from the Profound Stream Sect, a body refinement cultivator with a Lightningflame Profound Clone. Incomparably powerful, with exquisite magical techniques. He was once chased down by a Foundation Establishment cultivator, but survived for seven days without being killed. Is suspected to possess a Firespirit body, and has extraordinary healing abilities.” After reading the description, he looked over at the Profound Stream Sect disciples and quickly spotted Lei Shan. He was a burly, muscular young man, who was sitting there cross-legged, lighting and flame swirling around him. He looked impressive to the extreme.

Seemingly sensing Bai Xiaochun's gaze upon him, he looked over and smiled viciously, his eyes flickering with killing intent.

"He'd be a good opponent for Lu Tianlei," Bai Xiaochun thought. "They both love their lightning." Looking away, Bai Xiaochun continued on with the information in the jade slip.

"Fang Lin from the Pill Stream Sect, their number one Chosen of the current generation. Relatively unknown half a year ago, whereupon he suddenly rose to fame. Adept with the Dao of poison, and a decisive killer. Successfully cultivated the Heaven-Earth Furnace Cauldron, and has power that exceeds the peak of Qi Condensation. Very difficult to match. Has only fought two true battles. In one, he slaughtered eight rebel cultivators, all of them in the great circle of Qi Condensation. He wasn't even harmed during the fighting. In the other battle, he destroyed a defensive treasure comparable to the Foundation Establishment level, and killed a spy sent by the Spirit Stream Sect." Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he quickly identified Fang Lin in the crowd, a young man with an expressionless face.

"Nine-Isles from the Profound Stream Sect. The first Chosen in the Profound Stream Sect in the last 3,000 years to successfully cultivate the Exterminating Obliteration Technique. Supposedly, that technique can obliterate all life forms, and leaves nothing behind in its wake. It creates obliteration threads that not even Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivators can match up to!" Scalp tingling, Bai Xiaochun looked over and caught sight of a cold-faced young man sitting there in the crowd. Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure if he was seeing things or not, but it seemed like he had faintly visible magical symbols surrounding him that formed something like chains.

Just looking at him for a few moments caused Bai Xiaochun's eyes to hurt, and his vision to begin to fade. He quickly looked away from the terrifying young man. It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun realized that there were descriptions of almost all of the disciples from the Pill Stream Sect and the Profound Stream Sect. However, the information on the Blood Stream Sect disciples only had two entries.

“Xu Xiaoshan from the Blood Stream Sect. Ordinary talent, but a direct descendant of the founding patriarch of the Blood Stream Sect. Incredibly high position, silkpants personality. Possesses endless magical items!

“Song Que from the Blood Stream Sect. Number one Chosen, sometimes called Ascendant Limitless. Closely resembles Master Limitless. No details about his techniques, but in one heaven-defying battle, he killed a Foundation Establishment cultivator while he was only in Qi Condensation. An unprecedentedly dangerous threat to all Qi Condensation disciples. Special reward for killing him!” The first entry among the Blood Stream Sect disciples wasn't very impressive, but the second caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp, and his eyes to open as wide as saucers.

“Killed... killed a Foundation Establishment cultivator?” Bai Xiaochun's heart trembled with disbelief. After some thought, he decided that Song Que would be the perfect opponent for Ghostfang. As for his own poor little life, he most certainly wouldn't throw it away by taking him on.

The terrifying nature of the disciples from the other sects was

difficult to accept. Then, his heart suddenly trembled.

“Do the other three sects’ jade slips have information about me? I wonder what they say?” As his curiosity grew, he was just considering trying to find a friendly disciple from one of the other sects to trade jade slips with when suddenly, a wave of pressure descended from above.

The sky turned completely blood red as... the Blood Stream Sect arrived!

Their spell formation was very different from the Spirit Stream Sect’s. A shocking, blood-red severed hand appeared up above, blotting out the sky and obscuring the sun. Everything up above became completely crimson.

Shockingly, in the palm of the severed hand was a huge eye, completely bloodshot, and coldly bizarre to behold. The eye blinked, and all of Mount Flamecrane trembled. Moments later, a group of over a hundred figures began to materialize in a fourth location at the top of the mountain.

As they became visible, more pressure weighed down from above. Apparently, if anyone dared to launch a sneak attack at this moment, the enormous severed hand would descend with destructive power to destroy the ambushers.

Heaven and earth shook violently as the Blood Stream Sect appeared. They had the largest group of any of the three sects, a total of 121. Without the Foundation Establishment expert who was



their leader, they had brought a total of 120 disciples.

They all wore long red robes, and had icy expressions on their faces. They all seemed ready to kill at any moment, and looked at the disciples of the other sects the way that wolves will look at sheep.

Each and every one of the Blood Stream Sect disciples seemed fierce to the extreme, with intensely murderous auras. None of them seemed to trust each other, either. As soon as they materialized, they edged away from each other and then sat down cross-legged to meditate.

The disciples of the Pill Stream Sect seemed shaken, except for Zhao Rou and Fang Lin, whose eyes glittered with interest and vigilance.

The Profound Stream Sect disciples had a similar reaction. Other than the Chosen disciples, everyone trembled at the intimidating sight of the Blood Stream Sect.

Gasps could also be heard among the Spirit Stream Sect disciples. Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he instantly thought back to the introductions he had just read.

The Blood Stream Sect and the Spirit Stream Sect couldn't be more opposed in their philosophies. The Blood Stream Sect was ruled by the law of the jungle, and the threat of brutal violence and even death constantly hung over the heads of their disciples. They were almost a devilish sect, and the disciples who rose through the

ranks were all brutal and merciless.

“What a bunch of devils....” Bai Xiaochun thought, swallowing hard. “They even allow disciples to kill each other. How terrifying! The Spirit Stream Sect is definitely way better!” Resolving to be very careful around the Blood Stream Sect, he began to look for the two faces he recognized from the descriptions.

Obviously, the person to watch out for most was the heaven-defying Chosen named Song Que, who had killed a Foundation Establishment cultivator. It didn’t matter how he’d accomplished such a task, the mere fact that he’d succeeded showed how terrifying he was.

It didn’t take long to find him. He was a young man with ordinary features, but who radiated intense coldness. He wore different garments than his fellow disciples. His were not pure crimson, but instead, a darker magenta color. When he sat down cross-legged to meditate, not a single disciple dared to sit within three meters of him.

His murderous aura was intense to the extreme, and vastly surpassed all of the disciples around him. It even seemed to physically distort the air around him.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun spotted Song Que, Song Que looked back at him, as if he had been waiting to lay eyes on him. Their gazes met, and Bai Xiaochun was instantly filled with such terror that he almost wanted to flee in the opposite direction. It was the same feeling he had experienced when he was being chased through that nameless jungle by the murderous Chen Heng.

# Chapter 143: That Was Definitely On Purpose!

---

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and looked away to try to find Xu Xiaoshan.

He was actually the easiest to identify. He was extremely handsome, and had a very proud expression. He seemed to be the type of person whose chin was perpetually stuck up into the air, as if there were not a person in the world who was worthy to look him in the eyes. His silkpants personality couldn't be more obvious.

There were even two beautiful female disciples who attended to him.

One of them was currently massaging his shoulders, and another was peeling fruit which she then placed in his mouth.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but feel a little bit envious. Around this time, Bai Xiaochun noticed that a lot of the Blood Stream Sect disciples were doing the same thing that Song Que had done; they were staring at him with cold gazes.

Unlike the skepticism of the Pill Stream Sect or the arrogance of the Profound Stream Sect, the looks given by the Blood Stream Sect were fear-inspiring and filled with killing intent.

Bai Xiaochun felt his mouth and throat going dry. There seemed

to be something odd about the gazes of the Blood Stream Sect disciples, and Bai Xiaochun continued to grow more and more curious about what the other disciples' jade slips said about him.

The cultivator leading the Blood Stream Sect was an old man in a long red robe with crimson hair. His face was white, and he had a bit of a hunchback. His eyes were sinister to the extreme, and as he glanced over the crowd present, he licked his lips.

Shockingly, his tongue was not the tongue of an ordinary person. It was forked like a snake's, and caused all the disciples who saw it to shiver in fear.

Ouyang Jie and the two cultivators named Hai and Lin ceased their chatting and looked over at the Blood Stream Sect. When they saw the snake-tongued old man, Hai and Lin gasped. As for Ouyang Jie, his expression turned very serious.

"Master Snakescale," Ouyang Jie said in a somewhat unfriendly tone of voice. "The Blood Stream Sect is late."

The snake-tongued old man blinked, then forced an insincere smile onto his face. Eyes glittering with murder, he looked at Ouyang Jie and said, "Heh heh. I'm not late. You people just got here early."

Apparently the gazes of both men contained some vision-related divine ability, which caused an odd, soundless rumbling to build up between the two of them. A moment later it shattered, and Ouyang Jie let out a grunt. Face a bit pale, he swished his sleeve

and walked back to stand in front of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples.

As for the snake-tongued old man, his eyes glittered, and his qi and blood surged within him. He also fell back a few paces, and when he looked up, his eyes shone with a strange light.

“Ouyang, you old codger, after all these years, you’ve made quite an improvement with your cultivation base. Well, there will be time for reminiscing later. Now that the Blood Stream Sect has arrived, let’s open the Fallen Sword Abyss. It’s time for the trial by fire!” With that, he waved his hand, causing a fragment of jade to appear that seemed to have come from a pendant. The fragment instantly flew out and hovered in the air between the forces from the four sects.

Hai and Lin exchanged a glance, and then produced similar jade pendant fragments. Ouyang Jie did the same. Instantly, the four fragments flew together and formed a whole jade pendant.

Glittering light filled the air, and moments later, the glowing shield sealing the area around the giant sword began to open up. From the look of things, after enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, it would be possible to enter the area.

All of the Qi Condensation disciples were paying close attention to the goings-on. Even as Bai Xiaochun studied the situation, Ouyang Jie’s voice was transmitted into the ears of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples.

“There are more than forty entrances to the world of the sword. Each one can accommodate no more than ten people. The first battle you will fight will be to enter the sword itself. Ambushes on the inside have been known to occur, so do your best to stick together!

“Remember what I told you before. If you meet disciples from other sects, don’t be soft-hearted! To protect yourself, kill them if you can. Collect the earthstring energy into your Dao bottles and form the earthstring capture crystal as quickly as possible. Then begin to summon the surrounding earthstring energy from the rest of the Fallen Sword World!”

Even as Ouyang Jie gave his final explanations to the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, the Foundation Establishment cultivators from the other three sects were doing the same thing.

Ouyang Jie waved his right hand, and a hundred little blue bottles flew out into the hands of the disciples.

“These are your Dao bottles!” By this time, rumbling sounds were echoing out as the shield preventing access to the crevices in the ground opened fully, leaving a gap of roughly nine meters through which the disciples could enter.

By entering that gap, it was possible to go into the underground passages and into the depths of abyss, where one could find entrances leading into the world of the sword itself.

“This whole area is under the control of the Four Great Sects.

That, coupled with the oversight of the sects' patriarchs, means that no Foundation Establishment cultivators will be able to enter the world of the sword. Remember, you cannot stay inside for very long. The Holy Land will only remain opened for three months. After that time period expires, whether or not you have succeeded, you will have to leave. I will pull you out from the outside if I have to.

“Another thing. Although nothing extreme will happen that is outside of the purvey of expectation, for generations now, the patriarchs of the Four Great Sects have maintained four teleportation formations to evacuate you in case any emergency occurs. Based on the types of techniques you cultivate, the formations will identify you and teleport you back to the sect, or at least to the same continent.

“Of course, no amount of fighting and killing between disciples will trigger the teleportation formations! Finally, whether or not you succeed in reaching Earthstring Foundation Establishment, I truly hope that all of you... make it back alive!” As he looked out over the disciples, Ouyang Jie's usual cold demeanor softened a bit, and his expression even looked a bit encouraging. That was especially true when he looked at Bai Xiaochun and Ghostfang. When he looked at them, his eyes glowed with keen anticipation.

Seeing that the entrance was now open, the Blood Stream Sect immediately began to fly in that direction.

Among the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, Ghostfang was the first to leap into action, followed by Shangguan Tianyou and the other Chosen.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and then rapidly produced eight leather coats from his bag of holding. As he flew along, he also pulled out a big black wok, which he put on his back. Eyes shining with determination, he gritted his teeth and flew through the entrance. Of course, he didn't go alone; he made sure to follow along at the back of the group of Spirit Stream Sect disciples.

Soon, the disciples of the Four Great Sects had vanished into the crevices. Ouyang Jie, the snake-tongued old man, and the cultivators named Hai and Lin all exchanged glances, and then sat down cross-legged around the entrance, looking around vigilantly as they stood guard.

There were many crevices leading underground, some large, some small, and the Spirit Stream Sect disciples didn't all stick together. Ghostfang, Beihan Lie, Gongsun Wan'er, and some of the other Chosen chose to go alone.

The rest of the disciples split up into two groups, one made up of north bank disciples, and the other made up of south bank disciples. The forces from the Pill Stream Sect and the Profound Stream Sect acted similarly. However, the disciples from the Blood Stream Sect didn't seem to have much trust amongst themselves, and either acted alone, or split up into groups of two or three.

Bai Xiaochun looked around cautiously as he followed the south bank disciples into the depths. As soon as he was underground, he could sense the pulsing coldness rising up from below. It seemed to want to pierce into his body, to freeze his qi and blood. However, he was wearing too much clothing, making it impossible for the



cold to reach him....

The further down they got, the colder it became. Thankfully, they weren't very far from the surface. Combined with the level of their cultivation bases, they weren't in any harm.

Soon, the south bank disciples noticed that Bai Xiaochun was in the very back, and strange expressions appeared on their faces. However, those expression quickly transformed into smiles of joy. After all, with Bai Xiaochun there, they felt a lot safer. Although they were all in the tenth level of Qi Condensation, and very proud of that fact, they knew that Bai Xiaochun was far more powerful than them in every way.

Soon, they began to make room for him, stepping off to the side and clasping hands in greeting.

“Greetings Sect Uncle Bai!”

“It's the just and righteous Sect Uncle Bai! He's not like Shangguan Tianyou and those others who went off on their own. He's sticking with us!”

“Now that's what the south bank Chosen should be like! Sect Uncle Bai, it's me, Zhou Youdao! Do you still remember me? You really got me good in that acid rain incident....”

Bai Xiaochun looked at the group parting way to let him up to the front, and was initially shocked. Actually, he had hoped to find a

bit of safety by remaining in the back of the crowd. But after hearing how everyone was talking to him, he blinked and then cleared his throat. Sticking his chin up, he assumed the posture of someone of the Senior generation.

“Hahaha! None of you have a thing to worry about. With an important person like myself here, no one will dare to cause any problems for you!”

Delighted, the other disciples clustered around Bai Xiaochun, especially Zhou Youdao from Violet Cauldron Peak, who was all smiles.

Hou Yunfei ended up next to Bai Xiaochun. Considering his current getup, the fact that he was acting like someone from the Senior generation left Hou Yunfei chuckling. However, he couldn't forget everything that had occurred with the Luochen Clan.

“Good luck, Xiaochun,” he said quietly. “You're definitely going to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment!”

“I hope so too,” Bai Xiaochun replied. Looking around to make sure no one was listening, he leaned over with a scowl and said, “Hey, do you think the other disciples did this on purpose...? I originally wanted to stay in the back. How come I ended up in the front all of a sudden?”

A strange expression appeared on Hou Yunfei's face, and he coughed lightly. For some reason, he felt that whenever Bai Xiaochun was around, no matter how solemn or dangerous the

situation was, it would somehow become bizarre and amusing....

“Ah well, I can let it go.” Bai Xiaochun continued. “After all, I’m a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. Back on the south bank, I did drag these disciples into some bad situations with my pill concocting, so for now, I’ll just cut them some slack!” Sticking his chest out and looking very much the hero, he proceeded along as quickly as his cautious and nervous heart would let him.

Elsewhere in the subterranean crevices, disciples from the other sects went along alone, or in groups of between three to five. Any of them who saw the larger group of a few dozen would immediately avoid it. Even those who considered themselves to be superior would look at them coldly and then move on as quickly as possible.

Soon, the group caught sight of the body of the sword, and one of the gaps that led inside. However, there were already two beams of light shooting toward the gap.

Bai Xiaochun immediately decided to move on, but before he could, the surrounding Spirit Stream Sect disciples excitedly began to perform incantation gestures. In the blink of an eye, numerous magical techniques were bearing down on the two disciples from the other sects.

Both of them were from the Blood Stream Sect, and as soon as they saw the incoming magical techniques, their faces flickered, and they tried to dodge out of the way. Unfortunately, they weren’t quite quick enough, and were sent tumbling backward,

blood spraying out of their mouths. Then they fled, glaring hatefully at the Spirit Stream Sect the whole time.

Bai Xiaochun was pleasantly surprised that they'd managed to secure one of the gaps by means of superior numbers. Of course, considering his status, he simply cleared his throat and let the other disciples enter the gap ahead of him.

# Chapter 144: Lord Bai Is Gonna Fight You To The Death

---

There was no way to ensure that you wouldn't be ambushed after entering. One could only rely on one's skills and abilities to stay safe. Jade slips could not be used to send messages to those on the outside either. However, if several people from one sect all entered at the same time, they would be safe from anything except a brutal, large-scale ambush.

After four disciples entered the opening, Hou Yunfei chose to go in. Just before stepping inside, he asked a favor of Bai Xiaochun.

“If anything unexpected happens to me inside, please take care of my clan Junior Brother, Hou Yunqing.” Hou Yunqing was one of the most important younger clan members, although he wasn't a member of the Spirit Stream Sect, but rather, had stayed in the clan to further his cultivation.

Bai Xiaochun quickly comforted Hou Yunfei and told him not to be so depressing. Then he furtively handed him a paper talisman. Hou Yunfei was initially startled, but after looking at the talisman for a moment, was quite moved. With a final nod to Bai Xiaochun, he stepped into the entrance.

As soon as he disappeared, the gap went dark, indicating that it was no longer possible to use it as an entrance. Bai Xiaochun was a bit worried about Hou Yunfei, but considering the entrance had closed, there was little more to be done. With that, he led the group onward.

They proceeded along for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, chatting and laughing about Bai Xiaochun's antics on the south bank. They also talked about their hopes and ambitions for the future. When Bai Xiaochun slapped his chest and told them that his dream was to live forever, they all chuckled. Zhou Youdao loudly declared that his dream was to become a patriarch of the Spirit Stream Sect.

They were on the brutal and deadly path to Foundation Establishment, but as of this moment, they were able to relax slightly. With Bai Xiaochun in the lead, they didn't suffer any setbacks. Any gap they caught sight of was quickly taken over.

"Get him, boys!" Bai Xiaochun would cry.

"Hey, this place belongs to us!"

"Buzz off, this place is ours!"

"Well, what's this? How dare you glare at me? Get him, boys!"

Booms rang out constantly. At the same time, the number of Spirit Stream Sect disciples grew smaller and smaller. Every time one of them entered one of the gaps, they would express deep gratitude toward Bai Xiaochun. At the same time, the fact that the disciples would leap into action at the simple wave of his hand left Bai Xiaochun feeling very moved.

“So, this is what it feels like to be Chosen. No wonder so many people want to be one.” Even as he sighed about the matter, they approached another area with gaps in the sword. Unexpectedly, there was a large group of people fighting each other in the area. Even more shocking, there were a total of three gaps visible, and six powerful Blood Stream Sect disciples were holding them against nine disciples from the other two sects.

At the moment, the fighting had reached a deadlock. When Bai Xiaochun saw what was happening, his eyes glittered, and the remaining dozen or so Spirit Stream Sect disciples behind him all started to get excited. Without any further hesitation, Bai Xiaochun shouted, “Hey, this place belongs to us!”

The Blood Stream Sect disciples had been carrying out a mission for their sect to guard this location for as long as they could. They were already exhausted, so when they saw so many people from the Spirit Stream Sect arriving, their expressions flickered, and yet they didn’t flee. Instead, they vanished into the gaps.

The surrounding disciples from the Pill Stream Sect and the Profound Stream Sect were just about to charge into the entrances when they were bombarded by magical techniques and divine abilities, shoving them back. A moment later, Bai Xiaochun and the other Spirit Stream Sect disciples were blocking the way.

Aware that they had the advantage of numbers, Bai Xiaochun proudly said, “Humph! Be good little disciples and buzz off! Lord Bai is in a good mood today, so he won’t cause you any further trouble!”

The faces of the disciples from the other sects twitched.

“It’s him again!!”

“His name is Bai Xiaochun. What a villain! This is the third time he’s snatched an entrance from me!”

“Dammit! This is the second time for me. If it weren’t for him, I’d already be in the world of the sword!”

Because the group consisted of people from different sects, they were reluctant to join forces. Besides, even if they did, they would still be outnumbered by the Spirit Stream Sect. Eyes blazing with rage and helplessness, they watched as the Spirit Stream Sect disciples vanished into the three gaps.

Feeling very pleased, Bai Xiaochun watched five disciples enter the first gap before it went dark. Three people vanished into the second gap. As far as he was concerned, he was performing a great service for the sect.

As of this point, his mission was accomplished. Clearing his throat, he joined the final five Spirit Stream Sect disciples as they approached the third entrance. The surrounding disciples from the Pill Stream Sect and the Profound Stream Sect looked on, aware that by this point, it was too late to do anything about the situation.

Besides, even if the gap didn’t go dark after the Spirit Stream Sect



entered, they still wouldn't dare to enter for fear of an ambush on the other side.

Just as they were about to depart to look for another gap, their eyes widened, and their jaws dropped in shock. Then, cold, murderous smiles appeared on their faces.

Just now, when the fifth Spirit Stream Sect disciple entered the passageway, and Bai Xiaochun attempted to step in... it went dark.

“No way!!” Bai Xiaochun said, astonished. As he was shoved roughly out of the entrance, he swallowed and looked over his shoulder. There stood the group of disciples from the other sects, eyes flashing menacingly as they slowly walked toward him.

Each and every one was in the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation, and in their own sects, they were Chosen who everyone looked up to. Although they weren't the type who other disciples despaired of ever surpassing, they were still far beyond ordinary in terms of their natural talent.

“Why don't you go in, Bai Xiaochun? Hurry up, step into the entrance.”

“Yeah. If you don't, we'll help you. Maybe if we cut you into pieces, then you'll fit in.”

“Hahaha! You're finally gonna get what you paid for. You and your gang robbed me of three entrances. Now what are you gonna

do?!” Cold laughter and murderous auras spread out to fill the area. By this point, Bai Xiaochun was a common enemy that all the disciples hated.

He took a deep breath, and as the group prepared to attack, he smacked his bag of holding, producing a fistful of paper talismans which he slapped down all over himself. Instantly, blinding light radiated out as Bai Xiaochun created a 60-meter-wide world of brightness!

The popping sounds of shields being summoned turned into a deafening cacophony that filled the entire area.

The other disciples’ eyes went wide, and their minds reeled. They almost couldn’t believe what they were seeing. Bright, multicolored light filled a 60-meter-wide area as more than a hundred shields appeared. All of the disciples’ scalps were tingling in shock; this was something the likes of which they had never seen in their entire young lives.

“How... how many talisman shields is that?”

“Heavens! How rich is this guy? Dammit! Even if we had ten times as many people here, we wouldn’t be able to break through those shields!” Trembling on the verge of madness, the disciples stared at Bai Xiaochun with increasing astonishment.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he stood there, chest puffed out, hands clasped behind his back, chin stuck up, expression somewhat melancholy, like a lonely hero....

“Very well, you bunch of bullies, bring it on!” he said loudly. “Lord Bai is gonna fight you to the death!” From his tone of voice, it really seemed like he was ready to fight to the death.

Even as the words left his mouth, the Protomagnetic Wings popped out of the big black wok on his back, and he blurred into motion, slamming into the closest disciple, a long-faced young man from the Profound Stream Sect.

More precisely, Bai Xiaochun didn’t slam into the young man; his shields did. A full 60 meters away from Bai Xiaochun, a miserable shriek echoed out, and the young man was sent flying backward for some distance before he managed to grind to a halt. Wiping the blood from his mouth, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun’s shields, then sighed and left sullenly.

There was really no other option... even he knew that he couldn’t single-handedly break through Bai Xiaochun’s shields. Draining his energy in such a way would be pointless, and would only delay his ability to enter the world of the sword.

Everyone else was completely shaken by what they saw. Feeling completely helpless when it came to Bai Xiaochun, they began to disperse, fleeing in every direction at top speed.

Considering that there wasn’t even an entrance to struggle over, none of them were inclined to fight Bai Xiaochun to the death.

“Hey, don’t run! I’m ready to fight till the bitter end! You bunch

of bullies! Get back here!” Bai Xiaochun continued to call out at the top of his lungs, but it only caused the other disciples to move more quickly.

Soon, Bai Xiaochun was alone, standing there blinking. Although surviving the combined attack of the enemy disciples had wasted some time, staying on track toward Earthstring Foundation Establishment was the most important thing.

With that, he began to pull the paper talismans off and put them back into his bag of holding. Most of them had only burned through half of their charge, and thus, could still be used later.

Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and swished his sleeve like a lonely hero.

“Bai Xiaochun is not to be trifled with!”

With that, he flickered into motion, making his way down through the cracks and crevices as he tried to find another gap leading into the huge sword.

Of course, when it came to entering the sword world earlier or later, there were pros and cons to both.

Those who entered sooner would be able to start killing the earthstring banebeasts sooner, and begin collecting the earthstring energy. However, those people would find themselves higher up in the world of the sword, where the banebeasts didn't have much

earthstring energy in them. The banebeasts further down in the world of the sword could have ten times as much earthstring energy or even more.

It required a large collection of earthstring energy to form the earthstring capture crystal.

Another thing to consider was that the world of the sword was enormous, and also contained banesouls. Because banesouls had to be avoided, it was actually possible to proceed downward with greater speed if one was outside the sword.

The downside to being outside of the sword was that the cold became increasingly intense the further down you went. Eventually, it became so cold that Qi Condensation disciples couldn't survive. At a certain point, there was no other option than to enter the world of the sword, for one's own safety. In the end, the decision of when exactly to enter the sword was up to each individual's power and strength, and their own determination of what was best for them.

Bai Xiaochun already had a rather high level of cold resistance, and now that he thought about it, it made sense to go down as far as he could before choosing an entrance. That would actually put him ahead of many of the people who were already in the sword.

Time passed. Bai Xiaochun moved at top speed, almost a blur. He wasn't even aware of it, but he had already passed almost all of the other Qi Condensation disciples who had already entered the sword. The cold grew more and more intense, until he was starting to get stiff. Eventually, he reached the point where going too much

further might end up injuring him.

He took a deep breath as he looked down into the pitch black below.

“I think I can go another 300 meters....” He tried to use some paper talismans to stave off the cold, but they did little good. Shaking his head, he started looking around for a gap. All of a sudden, he noticed a spot roughly 90 meters down, where a young man was standing next to the body of the sword.

As soon as the young man sensed Bai Xiaochun, he looked over, and their gazes locked. Bai Xiaochun immediately recognized who this cold and vicious young man was.

“Blood Stream Sect. Song Que!”

“Spirit Stream Sect. Bai Xiaochun!”

# Chapter 145: Sentenced To Death!

---

Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. The person standing in front of him was capable of killing Foundation Establishment cultivators, and had already forged an unprecedented legend of heaven-defying ferocity. From what Bai Xiaochun knew, he should have been able to enter the world of the sword much earlier on. What could he possibly be doing so far down outside the sword?

As soon as Song Que's eyes locked onto him, Bai Xiaochun felt a sensation of deadly crisis, and a brewing killing intent that seemed as if it might explode if Bai Xiaochun made even the slightest move.

Song Que was equally shocked. He had never imagined that a second person other than himself would reach this level. Considering the coldness, this place was clearly beyond the limit for the Qi Condensation stage, and even most other Chosen wouldn't be able to reach it. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't seem to have any trouble here at all.

As he stared at Bai Xiaochun, Song Que recalled the information that he had read about him in the jade slip given him by the sect.

The two of them looked at each other, remaining completely motionless. To Song Que, Bai Xiaochun was a mysterious and unfathomable individual. Although he didn't seem to possess any killing intent, Song Que's intuition told him that if he tried to attack... one of the two of them would most likely die. Furthermore, he wasn't completely confident that he would be the

one to make it out alive.

After a long moment, Song Que took the initiative to speak.

“60 meters below this point is an entrance.”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered, and despite the pounding of his heart, he slowly resumed his downward movement. Of course, he had no way of knowing it, but that caused Song Que’s heart to beat faster and faster, as he prepared himself to counterattack the moment Bai Xiaochun made a move.

When the two of them were only a few meters apart, Song Que suddenly shifted to the side as if to cover an area of the sword behind him, his eyes shining with a threatening light.

“Sneaky little punk,” Bai Xiaochun murmured to himself. “He’s definitely up to no good!” He continued downward until he reached the 60-meter mark that Song Que had referred to. Sure enough, there was an opening there. After a bit of inspection, Bai Xiaochun relaxed a bit and then stepped inside.

After he disappeared, Song Que breathed a sigh of relief. Considering what the sect’s introduction had explained about Bai Xiaochun, Song Que knew that he wasn’t someone to be taken lightly. Finally, a vicious gleam appeared in Song Que’s eyes. After reaching the sixth level of Qi Condensation, he had never needed to act so cautiously around anyone. He’d even gone to the length of telling Bai Xiaochun about the location of the entrance down below.



“This Bai Xiaochun might be extraordinary, but once my plan is carried out, I’ll kill him as easily as stepping on an ant!” Eyes burning with killing intent and fervor, he turned to study the surface of the sword.

“The report from Senior Limitless was accurate. Here’s the energy node!”

\*\*

Bai Xiaochun felt like he was passing through a sheet of water. Moments later, he was inside the world of the sword. Everything around him was black and white.

The sky was white, and the land was black. Everything looked like an [ink wash painting](#)....

Mountains rose and fell, black river water swirled along, and up above he could see countless stars whose twinkling seemed like the blinking of eyes.

Most shocking of all was how the entire world was tilted. Bai Xiaochun almost felt like he was standing on the side of a hill.

It was a strange sensation that would take some time to get used to.

“Just what kind of sword is this? It has a whole world inside of it? It’s a lot smaller than the real world outside, but it’s still completely shocking.” As he looked around, he realized that he was completely alone. Based on his calculations, he wasn’t in the deepest parts of the sword world, but he was definitely much further in than most of the other disciples.

After a bit of thought, he proceeded downward, leaving the entrance behind. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he reached the crest of a small mountain, whereupon his expression flickered. His right hand shot out, shining with silver light as he snapped his two fingers in the air off to the side.

Ripples spread out as a black snake appeared next to him, only as wide as a finger. Before it could do anything, it flew into his hand, and he grabbed it behind the jaw.

The snake let out a piercing cry that instantly broke the silence, simultaneously wrapping around Bai Xiaochun’s forearm and squeezing down tightly.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked by the snake’s strength. Were it not for the fact that his fleshly body could already make contact with the first shackle, the snake would most likely have been able to break free.

He pressed down with both fingers, and a cracking sound rang out as the snake’s head was crushed. The snake went limp, and then simply dissolved into a strand of gray energy roughly as wide as a stick of incense, which instantly began to float away.

“So that’s earthstring energy, huh?” He quickly pulled out his Dao bottle to collect it. After shaking the bottle a bit, he watched the earthstring energy materialize into a gray drop of liquid.

“I’d need something like a thousand of these drops to fill the bottle....” Taken aback, he looked back in the direction he’d come from. If he needed to kill a thousand banebeasts in this area to fill the bottle, who knew how many it would be necessary to kill further back.

“I need to go more quickly. I have to form that earthstring capture crystal as soon as possible.” With that, he hurried onward at top speed, searching for banebeasts the entire way. Three days later, he had about thirty drops worth of gray fluid in his Dao bottle.

During those three days, he’d killed dozens of banebeasts just to get that small amount. He felt like he was moving at a snail’s pace.

“At this speed, it’s going to take more than two months to get that earthstring capture crystal.” He stood there with gritted teeth as he realized that the best thing to do was go even deeper. With that, he proceeded onward at top speed. After about two hours, he suddenly stopped in place as he caught sight of two corpses up ahead.

These were the first people Bai Xiaochun had seen inside the world of the sword. Clearly, they had proceeded at top speed to get here so quickly, or perhaps had some other means of reaching this

point.

One of them wore the clothing of the Spirit Stream Sect, and was an Inner Sect disciple from the south bank. The other wore the uniform of the Pill Stream Sect. Apparently, the two of them had fought each other to the death here. The Pill Stream Sect disciple had a Dao bottle in his hand.

Even from a distance, Bai Xiaochun recognized the south bank disciple. It was Zhou Youdao from the Inner Sect on Violet Cauldron Peak. He was one of the group of five who had entered the last of the three entrances. He had been very enthusiastic about addressing Bai Xiaochun as Sect Uncle Bai, and on the underground journey outside the sword, had fought well against the disciples from the other sects. Bai Xiaochun would never have thought that he would end up dead.

A strange, indescribable feeling rose up in Bai Xiaochun's heart. Only a few days ago, he had been laughing and joking with Zhou Youdao. The next time he saw him, they were eternally separated by death. It almost felt as if this entire world were permeated by ruination and mortality, creating a crushing pressure that instantly reminded Bai Xiaochun of the danger around him. The slightest misstep could leave him dead. It was even possible that people might use his corpse to set traps for other disciples as well.

Fury began to burn in Bai Xiaochun's eyes, and his fists clenched into balls. Other than Feng Yan from years ago, this was the first fellow disciple Bai Xiaochun personally knew who had died, and it caused sorrow to grip his heart. He couldn't forget how Zhou Youdao had talked about his dream of becoming a patriarch of the

## Spirit Stream Sect.

“Immortal cultivation is supposed to be about living a better life. It’s about achieving your dreams. Why? Why... does there have to be all this fighting and killing...? Is it worth it?” It only took a glance for him to realize that the two corpses were a trap. Despite that, he chose... to proceed forward.

As soon as he neared the corpses, rumbling sounds echoed out from the ground. Apparently, some medicinal pills had been hidden in the area which were now exploding, sending plumes of toxic gas up toward Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, a flying sword shot like lightning toward him, a sword surrounded by an illusory scorpion, which emitted high-pitched shrieks!

At exactly the same moment, a frighteningly powerful explosion ripped through the air from the other side, the result of more detonated medicinal pills.

On one side was a flying sword, on the other was an explosion, and he was surrounded by a toxic spell formation. Anyone who casually stepped into a situation like this would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt.

A cold snort echoed out through the toxic gas, and someone shouted, “Die!”

Bai Xiaochun settled his qi. His face was extremely grim as the volcanic rage that had been building up in his chest suddenly erupted.

“You’ll be the one to die!” he said, his voice booming like thunder, spreading out in all directions like a gale-force wind that could topple mountains and drain seas.

His hair whipped about, his eyes shone with killing intent. It was an awesome spectacle!

His thunderous voice swept out, filled with sorrow and fury. It became a powerful attack that instantly smashed into the toxic smoke.

In the blink of an eye, the smoke was blasted away, revealing the flying sword and the explosion, as well as the two shocked disciples who had unleashed them, a young man and a young woman from the Pill Stream Sect.

The scorpion surrounding the sword let out a bloodcurdling shriek as it was crushed out of existence as if by a gigantic hand. Cracking sounds rang out from the sword as it was drained of spiritual power, then sent spinning off to the side.

As for the explosions, even their terrifying force was redirected by Bai Xiaochun, sent to land in a completely different direction.

Suddenly, everything seemed to go blurry. Shocking energy

radiated out from Bai Xiaochun, who seemed to grow taller as he spoke out in a powerful voice.

“Anyone who kills a disciple of the Spirit Stream Sect will be sentenced to death!”

His words echoed like thunder, and carried the threat of extermination!

They added additional force to the blast in the area, which was no longer like a strong wind. It contained Bai Xiaochun’s killing intent, and more than that, the power of the life essence spirit of his Waterswamp Kingdom!

That was power that could easily shatter mountains and dry up seas!

Suddenly, water vapor became visible in the area. The Waterswamp Kingdom... was coming!

## Chapter 146: Power!

---

The two Pill Stream Sect disciples' hair flew about wildly, and their robes whipped about. Their faces were ashen, and even their skin seemed to be pressed down from the force. They were terrified to the extreme as the wild wind battered them, turning them into rowboats in a hurricane as the mountain-toppling, sea-draining force inundated them, sending them staggering stagger back, blood spraying out of their mouths.

The female disciple was trembling violently, blood oozing out her eyes, ears, and nose. As she lurched away from Bai Xiaochun, it quickly became apparent that she couldn't endure the force that was pushing against her. She let out a bloodcurdling scream as first her eyes exploded, then her head, and then her entire body!

She instantly transformed into a haze of blood that was swept away by the wind.

"No!!" screamed the male disciple. Blood began to pour out of his mouth, and he was shaking violently. His world began to turn black, and he let out an agonized shriek. Never in his darkest nightmares could he have imagined that he would provoke... someone as indescribably heaven-defying as this.

The energy and pressure felt like something from an elder in his sect. It was something that a Qi Condensation disciple should never have to endure, something that not even the most powerful Chosen he knew, Fang Lin, could stand up to!



“It was wrong. The information the sect gave us was totally wrong!! Don’t kill me! I....” The blood-soaked male disciple was breaking down mentally, and began to plead and weep. He didn’t want to die, and could hardly bear the terror he felt. However, before he could finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun stepped forward and grabbed him by the throat.

“My Sect Nephew Zhou didn’t want to die,” he growled. “And you know what? I didn’t want to kill anyone, either.” Bai Xiaochun was not the type of person to be friends with just anybody. His heart belonged to the Spirit Stream Sect.

It didn’t matter how that had come to be; to him, the Spirit Stream Sect was home!

He tightened his grip, and a cracking sound could be heard as the Pill Stream Sect disciple’s neck was crushed. His eyes bulged, and his legs twitched a few times. Then he was dead!

Things gradually went quiet. Bai Xiaochun released his grip and then walked back to Zhou Youdao’s corpse. He sighed.

“Zhou Youdao,” he said softly, “allow me to bring you back to the sect.” With that, he put Zhou Youdao’s corpse into his bag of holding, taking his Dao bottle but leaving his bag of holding untouched.

As for the people from the Pill Stream Sect, he searched them thoroughly. Before leaving, he put the contents of the four Dao bottles he had collected into his own. Altogether, they hadn’t even

collected half as much as he had on his own.

At long last, he had a chance to see what the Pill Stream Sect disciples' jade slips said about him.

“Bai Xiaochun from the Spirit Stream Sect. A genius in the Dao of medicine, suspected to be the so-called little turtle of the sect. Unknown techniques, unclear battle prowess. Sometimes weak, sometimes strong, has a large collection of magical objects. Took first place in the sect's Chosen battles, likely due to negligence on the part of Ghostfang. If you encounter him, worry about his Dao of medicine, not his battle prowess. Attack him two-to-one.”

Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure where the Pill Stream Sect got their information, but now he was even more curious about what the information from the Profound Stream Sect and the Blood Stream Sect said. With that, he left.

Four hours later, an expressionless young man approached the scene. It was none other than Fang Lin from the Pill Stream Sect. Eyes glittering, he looked around the area to determine what had occurred.

Before long, he was standing in the spot where Bai Xiaochun had let out that powerful roar. He closed his eyes as if he were seeking enlightenment. Soon, his expression flickered, and his eyes snapped open.

“So strong! Who did this...? Song Que? Ghostfang? Nine-Isles?” Fang Lin took a deep breath as the desire to fight rose up in his

heart. Looking around, he identified the path Bai Xiaochun had taken when he left, and then picked a different direction, unwilling to make contact at the moment.

Four hours later, another person appeared. He was a tall, burly man surrounded by flame lightning. After looking around, his eyes began to shine, and he started panting.

“It wasn’t Song Que, nor was it Nine-Isles. Could it have been Ghostfang? Dammit. I don’t want to provoke any one of those three!” This man was none other than Lei Shan. After looking around, he hesitated, unable to determine exactly which direction the terrifying figure responsible for the scene had taken. Gritting his teeth, he randomly picked a direction, which just so happened to be the same direction Bai Xiaochun had taken.

Time sped by. Over the following three days, quite a few people passed by the area. Some picked up on the clues, others didn’t.

On evening of the third day, Song Que approached. Although the traces of the battle were mostly gone by that time, he could sense that there was something odd about the area. Squatting down, he put his right hand onto the surface of the ground. A moment later, his eyes shone brightly.

“Such energy.... This was neither Nine-Isles nor Fang Lin. Not Ghostfang either. In that case, it must have been... Bai Xiaochun!”

Narrowing his eyes, he turned and sped off into the distance.

Around that same time, Bai Xiaochun was also speeding along through the world of the sword. Whenever he encountered an earthstring banebeast, he would kill it and collect its earthstring energy.

More gray liquid was building up in his Dao bottle, but he was still quite a ways away from being able to form the earthstring capture crystal. In the current area, the banebeasts provided a lot more earthstring energy than those from further back, but unfortunately, they were harder to find. Much of his time was wasted traveling to and fro.

Apparently, the earthstring banebeasts were partly illusory and partly corporeal, making it possible for them to merge into the air itself. They were very difficult to track down, and sometimes even randomly disappeared in the middle of a fight. Were it not for Bai Xiaochun's exceptional senses, he might not even have been able to detect them.

They would only materialize if you got very close to their hiding spot. Otherwise, they would remain hidden.

"I need to figure out a better method. The best way would be to get a bunch of earthstring banebeast in the same area. My current method is too slow. Even attacking disciples from other sects wouldn't be fast enough." Even as he pondered the matter, he suddenly stopped in place. A whooshing sound could then be heard as a scaled hand reached out as if to grab him. When it grabbed nothing but air, it began to pull back, but before it could, Bai Xiaochun reached out and grabbed it.

Then, he jerked his hand back, and a thunderous crash rang out like that of a giant mirror shattering. At the same time, a three-meter-tall ape-like earthstring banebeast was dragged out of thin air.

It had no hair, only black scales, and as Bai Xiaochun dragged it out, it let out a powerful roar. Its eyes shone with ferocity, but very little intelligence. Almost immediately, it attempted to pounce on Bai Xiaochun, whose eyes flickered as he extended his left hand and grabbed the ape by the neck. Instead of crushing it, though, he pulled it a bit closer and began to examine it closely. Soon, his eyes began to shine with a strange light.

“If I could concoct a spirit medicine that could attract these banebeasts... that would definitely solve the problem. Then I could form that earthstring capture crystal even faster. At the very least... it would be faster than trying to kill and rob other disciples.” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun made his way off to the distance, eyes glittering, ape in tow.

His destination was a valley up ahead, where he found a secluded place to hide and study the banebeast. His powerful gaze left the thing shivering, as though by merely looking at it he could see everything about its internal structure.

Of course, the truth was he couldn't do that. At the moment, this banebeast was simply a subject for research, much the way some of the snakes had been to him years ago in 10,000 Snakes Valley. If he wanted to make a spirit medicine that would specifically target this kind of beast, then he obviously would need to study them on

many levels.

Eyes burning with passion, he reached into his bag of holding and pulled out a flying sword. Soon after, he was slicing open the banebeast's chest.

The next day, his eyes were bloodshot as he left the valley.

“There isn't much difference between them and ordinary beasts. They have the same organs, and even have blood.... However, as soon as they die, all of that vanishes and transforms into earthstring energy.

“Another strange thing is that the earthstring banebeasts don't have any food inside their stomachs.... Is it that they don't need to eat food?” With that, he captured another banebeast to perform further experiments.

A few days later, more and more disciples were showing up in the area, which could be considered to be the middle section of the sword world. Some of them attacked other disciples to steal their Dao bottles, others went after the banebeasts. By this time, Bai Xiaochun had studied more than ten different banebeasts, and his eyes were more bloodshot than ever. His hair was disheveled, and he almost looked as if he had gone mad.

“Poor eyesight, and a bad sense of smell, and yet they seem very perceptive.... How do they merge into the air? How are they formed from earthstring energy? And why do they attack cultivators?” Bai Xiaochun was now fully immersed in the Dao of

medicine by this point. Continuing to mutter questions to himself, he confirmed that the banebeasts would always take the initiative to attack him, and did so with bloodthirsty ferocity.

“Wait a second....” His heart began to pound as he realized that he might be onto something. Looking up suddenly, he hurried forward to find a banebeast to confirm his new theory.

Before long, a nine-meter-long earthstring bear appeared in front of him. It was covered with black scales, and was currently being besieged by five disciples in long, blood-red robes.

Obviously, they were Blood Stream Sect disciples. Their killing intent was raging, and they didn’t seem to care about anything except the kill. They didn’t even care when one of their fellow disciples was suddenly killed.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes glittered as he transformed into a beam of light that shot toward the area. Even as the four Blood Stream Sect disciples were preparing to launch another salvo, a blur appeared and someone reached out and grabbed the huge bear.

The Blood Stream Sect disciples’ eyes went wide. None of them immediately recognized Bai Xiaochun, but they could tell that he was wearing the clothing of the Spirit Stream Sect. Soon, cold smiles appeared on their faces, as well as derision. During their fight with the bear, they had come to realize that it had certain special qualities, including a terrifying fleshly body power.

# Chapter 147: A Strange Pill Appears!

---

“He’s gonna get himself killed!”

“The Spirit Stream Sect people are all so arrogant! That’s a mid-level banebeast, not a low-level banebeast. Is he looking to die?!” The Blood Stream Sect disciples chuckled coldly as they imagined the banebeast ripping the Spirit Stream Sect disciple to shreds.

However, even as the cold smiles appeared on their faces, they suddenly trembled, and their eyes went wide with disbelief and shock.

What they saw was Bai Xiaochun, his hair in complete disarray, grabbing onto the bear, which let out a terrifying roar. It then bared its teeth as if to rip Bai Xiaochun’s arm off of his body and shred it to pieces.

However, as soon Bai Xiaochun’s hand latched down onto it, the bear acted as though a mountain of pressure had just crushed down onto it. Rumbling sounds echoed out as Bai Xiaochun pushed the bear down into the ground.

The ground trembled, and the four Blood Stream Sect disciples all gasped, hardly able to believe their eyes.

“This....”

“How is this possible?!?!”



“Such incredible strength!”

The four of them swallowed hard, and yet, weren't willing to simply leave. Even as they eyed Bai Xiaochun, he once again did something that left them trembling.

Immersed as he was in his research, he completely ignored the Blood Stream Sect disciples. A flying sword appeared in his left hand, and in front of the eyes of all of the Blood Stream Sect disciples, he began to slice open the banebeast's arm.

Blood sprayed everywhere, along with earthstring energy. The banebeast howled, and Bai Xiaochun, apparently annoyed by the sound, slit its throat. The Blood Stream Sect disciples' eyes went wide, and they began to tremble and back up, eyes radiating reverence toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun didn't notice. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he managed to completely dissect the banebeast. Although the pieces were already starting to fade away, the mere sight of the sliced up bear left the Blood Stream Sect disciples feeling as though their heads were about to explode.

“Did he... did he have a grudge with that particular banebeast? Or does he always do that to them? Heavens! That's the most terrifying thing I've ever seen, even in the Blood Stream Sect!”

“It must be some twisted hobby of his....”

One of the disciples pulled out a jade slip, checked it, and then said, “That’s... that’s Bai Xiaochun!!”

The other three disciples gasped at the mention of the name. Without even the slightest hesitation, they began to back up, doing everything possible to get as far away as they could.

Some time later, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were shining with excitement. Taking a deep breath, he rose to his feet and began to pace back and forth, occasionally gesticulating with one hand or the other.

“I get it now. The banebeasts look like ordinary beasts, but there’s something different about them. Spiritual energy is as useful to them as earthstring energy is to cultivators trying to reach Foundation Establishment! That’s why any disciples who get eaten by them instantly disappear into nothing. They get totally absorbed....

“Hahaha! I can definitely concoct the pill I need!” He threw his head back and laughed uproariously, then looked around, somewhat surprised to find that everyone had left.

Shaking his head, he blurred into motion, heading off into the distance to find a cave. Once he found a suitable location, he produced some earthflame crystals and began to concoct. He had the pill formula in mind, which he followed based on his understanding of the banebeasts.

In addition to the medicinal plants, he added in some of his own blood. Worried that that might not be enough, he called upon the principles of mutual augmentation and suppression to adjust things perfectly.

He spent four hours concocting, after which the pill furnace began to rumble. When the sound died down, a medicinal pill appeared. Bai Xiaochun grabbed it and set off to look for banebeasts. After finding one, he threw out the medicinal pill, but was disappointed to find that it didn't have any effect whatsoever.

“This can't be right! What went wrong!?” The next few days, he spent more time researching the banebeasts. By that time, it had been twenty days since the opening of the Fallen Sword Abyss.

Most of the disciples of the four sects had reached the depths of the world, and were in different areas fighting and killing banebeasts.

The Blood Stream Sect was truly strong, and incredibly vicious. The Profound Stream Sect and the Spirit Stream Sect were about evenly matched, with the Pill Stream Sect being the weakest of them all.

There were even fights that broke out between some of the top Chosen from the various sects. The most noteworthy fight was when Ghostfang fought Nine-Isles from the Profound Stream Sect. It lasted an entire day, and shook everything in the area. In the end, Nine-Isles was seriously injured and fled. Having come out victorious, Ghostfang came to be known as the one person who was qualified to fight Song Que.

Gongsun Wan'er and Zhao Rou fought a few times, and although there were always clear winners and losers, neither managed to kill the other.

Shangguan Tianyou put on quite a show. In the middle of killing a banebeast, he saw Fang Lin, the number one Chosen from the Pill Stream Sect, and the two of them fought a fierce battle. In the end, it was hard to say who came out on top.

Song Que from the Blood Stream Sect was like a shadowy specter. He never attacked anyone, and few people even saw him.

As for the other person listed in the information about the Blood Stream Sect, Xu Xiaoshan, he also began to make a name for himself. People bristled with anger at the sheer amount of magical items he had at his disposal. When he unleashed them in battle, any opponent he fought was left shocked.

One disciple who quickly came to be known as a dark horse in the competition was... Beihan Lie from the Spirit Stream Sect. Not much information about him had been made available to the other three sects, and therefore, people took him to be an ordinary Chosen. Who could ever have imagined that when he encountered Lei Shan from the Profound Stream Sect, a massive battle would ensue?

In the end, Beihan Lie seemed to be on the same level as Lei Shan, which was shocking considering that other than Nine-Isles, he was considered to be the top Chosen of his generation in the Profound

Stream Sect. Very few people could hold their own in a fight against him.

Before, he was simply a Chosen from the Spirit Stream Sect. For him to be able to do such a thing left many people shocked.

In addition to the friction and fighting between the famous Chosen, there were many fierce battles between the other disciples. People died on a daily basis, and some unlucky people were eaten by the banebeasts.

As for the disciples who survived all of the fighting, their collections of earthstring energy grew. Soon, it was getting harder and harder to find the banebeasts, which meant that the fighting between disciples started to grow fiercer!

People ganged up on others. People set traps. Some people simply overwhelmed others with direct force. All sorts of tactics were unleashed, until the Fallen Sword Abyss began to devolve into chaos.

Eyes were bloodshot as people fought back and forth in the struggles for earthstring energy. Nobody wanted to be the last person to collect the energy they needed, and everyone wanted to be first!

Bai Xiaochun was aware of the murderous atmosphere around him. However, he didn't go out much. He spent most of his time doing research or concocting medicine. Even still, he ran into the corpses of seventeen Spirit Stream Sect disciples.

Whenever he did, he would carefully store the corpses in his bag of holding to take them back to the sect.

When he went out looking for banebeasts, he went about his work as quickly as possible. He would strike like lightning, grab the banebeast, and then take it away to study. Afterward, he would go back to concocting.

Before he even realized it, his Dao bottle of gray liquid was about a third full. However, he didn't pay much attention to that. He focused mostly on concocting.

By this point, he had failed dozens of times. On a few occasions, he failed five or six times in one day. However, he didn't give up. As he grew more familiar with the anatomy of the banebeasts, he slowly slipped into a frenzy. At one point, he even personally went to observe how a banebeast would go about killing a cultivator.

At that point, he realized that the attacks weren't physical, but rather, an absorption of life force. Suddenly, all of his experiences and research up to that point coalesced into an epiphany. He quickly selected a remote mountain cave and set about concocting, his eyes completely bloodshot.

This session lasted for five days, during which time he didn't set a single foot outside. He failed dozens of times. However, on evening of the fifth day, as the sky grew dark and fighting filled the lands around him, intense rumbling sounds began to emanate from his pill furnace, spreading out to fill half of the entire Fallen

Sword World.

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

It was like heaven-rending, earth-crushing thunder that spread out in all directions. Shockingly, black clouds appeared above the cave, which pulsed with strands of white energy!

All of the disciples of the four sects who were in that part of the Fallen Sword World looked in the direction where Bai Xiaochun was concocting medicine. Everyone was completely shocked.

Ghostfang had been in the middle of speeding along on a task when he suddenly heard the rumbling sound, and his eyes glittered.

In another location, Song Que was in front of a nondescript stone wall, studying it carefully. When he heard the sound, his eyes widened. “What’s that sound?”

Xu Xiaoshan from the Blood Stream Sect felt his heart began to pound. “Is a precious treasure appearing in the world?!?!”

Eyes widening, he picked up speed, heading in the direction of the sound.

Lei Shan from the Profound Stream Sect was relatively close to the source of the sounds, and was just as intrigued as Xu Xiaoshan. Eyes shining with excitement and curiosity, he sped off toward the

sound.

The bizarre thunderous rumbling didn't just attract the attention of the cultivators. It also attracted... banebeasts!

And also... in some mysterious location within the Fallen Sword World, it caught the attention of... banesouls!!



## Chapter 148: Come Play With Me, Big Bro

---

In the half of the Fallen Sword World that was affected, countless areas began to distort and twist. It seemed as though countless slumbering banebeasts within the air itself were suddenly being awoken by the crashing of thunder. Somehow, they could sense Bai Xiaochun's spirit medicine, and trembled, slowly opening their eyes.

Although there were disciples from the four sects in some of the areas where the banebeasts began to wake up, most of the areas were devoid of cultivators. As soon as the banebeasts opened their vicious eyes, they looked in Bai Xiaochun's direction, radiating greed and madness. Moments later, countless howls ripped through the air.

Ripples spread out through the Fallen Sword World like waves on water, stirring the banebeasts, which began to rush at top speed through the air.

However, what was more shocking than the banebeasts was what happened in certain locations where the banebeasts didn't dare to enter. There, numerous shadowy figures began to appear out of thin air.

There were men and women, old and young. The youngest of them all was a little girl in a white dress. Clutched in her arms was a skinless, blood-colored bear. They floated there with blank looks in their eyes, accompanied by various strange beasts that were not native to the lands of Heavenspan.

They were banesouls!

All of the living things which had been killed by this enormous sword during its existence beyond the heavens were affected by earthstrings and transformed into these lifeless souls!

They were bizarre and enigmatic to the extreme, and apparently, were not people of the lands of Heavenspan. They had come from the legendary region beyond the heavens, the location of that which was eternal!

Now they were scattered about through the various remote regions of the Fallen Sword World, in places where the banebeasts didn't dare to even approach.

As of this moment, numerous such figures were stepping out of thin air to appear in the open. Some of them wore ancient robes, some wore battle armor, and some had skin made of scales instead of flesh. They looked strange; most of them badly mutilated, as if from combat wounds. Some had missing arms, some were partially decapitated, some had gaping wounds in their torsos. As they appeared, black mist pulsed out from them in all directions.

All of the banesouls had blank expressions. They had no consciousness, nor any memories. Anywhere they passed, the banebeasts would be left trembling, and would simply cower as they went by. Any banebeast which was unlucky enough to actually be touched by one of the banesouls would instantly be destroyed and vanish into nothing.

The banesouls that had the shape of beasts were particularly bizarre, as if they had been pieced together from parts of different creatures!

The banesouls began to float through the air, picking up speed until they were moving unbelievably quickly. Nothing could block their path as they headed straight toward Bai Xiaochun!

Vast numbers of them were converging upon him from all directions!

As they passed along, some of the disciples from the four sects realized that something strange was happening. They saw the air rippling as countless banebeasts appeared, and at first, many of the ecstatic disciples rushed forward to try to kill them. But soon, their scalps began to tingle as they realized that there were far too many, hordes of them, like a tide of banebeasts!

“What’s going on?!”

“Heavens! The banebeasts are usually so hard to find. Why are there so many of them all of a sudden!?”

“Something must have happened. Dammit! That’s not a banebeast, that’s a banesoul!” Cries of astonishment began to ring out all over the Fallen Sword World. As soon as the disciples realized that there were banesouls flying among the banebeasts, they began to flee.

The banesouls were terrifying, and the elders of the Four Great Sects had repeatedly warned all of their disciples about their existence within the Fallen Sword Abyss. Under no circumstances were the banesouls to be provoked! They were to be avoided at all costs!

“Even the banesouls are attracted to whatever is in that direction. Just what exactly is happening over there!?”

“Let’s follow from a distance and check it out!” The disciples began to follow the tide of banebeasts and banesouls, either alone or in groups of between three to five.

By this point, half of the entire Fallen Sword World was being utterly shaken by the nine volleys of thunder created by Bai Xiaochun’s spirit medicine.

Within the mountain cave, Bai Xiaochun sat there looking a bit gaunt, his hair disheveled as he stared at the pill furnace. With every rumbling boom, more cracks would spread out across the surface of the furnace.

After the ninth boom, the pill furnace suddenly trembled violently and then exploded, sending fragments shooting out in all directions. At the same time, four beams of mysterious black light emerged.

Bai Xiaochun had been prepared for just such a thing to occur. He instantly unleashed the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, creating an invisible field of control in the area that enabled him to quickly

secure the four spirit medicines which had been trying to escape.

“Think you can get away?” he said with a proud harumph. Looking down at the four medicinal pills with shining eyes, he hurried toward the mouth of cave to see if they would work on the banebeasts.

However, the instant he emerged, his expression flickered, and he took a step back, just avoiding a black scorpion tail which slashed through the air in the spot where he had just been standing.

A moment later, a three-meter-long black scorpion materialized out of thin air, its eyes burning with madness and greed as it stared at the four medicinal pills in Bai Xiaochun’s hand. Then, it lunged forward.

Considering the ferocity of its movements, it didn’t appear to be a low-level banebeast. It was a mid-level beast, much like the bear from earlier.

Eyes glittering, Bai Xiaochun reached out with this left hand, moving like lightning as he grabbed the scorpion’s tail. Then he smashed it against the stone wall of the cave. At the same time, he sent some spiritual power into the scorpion’s body, to its weakest spot, which he crushed. The scorpion twitched, and then went limp and began to fade away, transforming into earthstring energy that Bai Xiaochun quickly collected up.

An ordinary cultivator would never be able to deal with a mid-

level banebeast so easily, which was why the Senior members of the sect had warned the disciples about them. Bai Xiaochun was different, though. After studying nearly a hundred banebeasts, he was very familiar with their weaknesses, and could kill them easily.

“The pills just came out of the furnace and they’re already attracting the attention of banebeasts. Hahaha! Bai Xiaochun’s medicinal pills are a success!” Bai Xiaochun was excitedly contemplating whether or not to perform a spirit enhancement on the pills, when suddenly, numerous ripples began to spread out in the area as one banebeast after another appeared.

“So many! Alright, that’s more than enough. Hahaha! At this rate, Bai Xiaochun is definitely going to be the first to reach Foundation Establishment!”

Bai Xiaochun was so excited he almost started dancing in place. Just as he was about to reap his bountiful harvest, his expression flickered, and his eyes went wide as he noticed a partially decapitated figure off in the distance. He wore a long gray robe, and the one eye that remained on his face had a blank expression. He floated along through the air, his head twitching a bit. Eventually, he laid eyes on Bai Xiaochun, and suddenly, his expression changed.

He suddenly seemed to be filled with longing. Eyes locked onto Bai Xiaochun, or more specifically, the medicinal pills in his hand, he began to speed forward.

The banebeasts in the area all trembled at the sight of him, and

didn't dare to even move. As the figure sped along, he hit seven or eight banebeasts in the process, causing them to shriek and then explode.

“A banesoul?! The pills even attract them? Well, at least it's only one of- huh?” Before he could finish speaking, another banesoul appeared further off in the distance. This one was missing its arms, and had wildly disheveled hair. It wore a set of dilapidated armor, and was also staring longingly at Bai Xiaochun as it sped toward him.

Things weren't over yet. An old man appeared off in the distance, with a huge, gaping wound in his abdomen. He too began to head directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's scalp began to tingle with fear. Taking a deep breath, he took a step as if to flee, only to find to his shock that there weren't just three or four or five banesouls in the area, there was an entire horde!!

Ripples filled the area as numerous banesouls appeared in quick succession, their eyes gleaming with longing. Bai Xiaochun's face drained of blood as he contemplated what it would feel like to be ripped to pieces.

“How could this be happening?!” He wanted to cry, but no tears would come at the moment. His first thought was to flee. He had no desire to face so many banesouls. Even members of the Senior generation of the four sects would likely perish at the hands of these banesouls, much less the Qi Condensation disciples.

However, in the moment that Bai Xiaochun made to flee, the banesouls all looked at him and screamed. The power within their voices caused the banebeasts to tremble even harder. A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and he teetered on the verge of unconsciousness as he staggered backward. It felt like he had just been hit with a hammer; blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he began to tremble in fear. Screaming, he bit his tongue, using the pain to stay awake as he took to flight.

Cold sweat broke out all over him as wings appeared behind the black wok on his back. With that, he unleashed all the speed he could muster, transforming into a series of afterimages that shot off into the distance. However, the flying banesouls also increased their speed.

In the blink of an eye, the dozens of nearby banesouls all took to flight in pursuit of Bai Xiaochun.

One of the fastest banesouls was the partially decapitated one that had appeared first. However, in addition to that one, there was a girl in a white dress. Although she didn't scream like the others, her face was especially cold and sinister, and her blank eyes glimmered with intense longing.

When the disciples of the four sects who had been following along saw what was happening, their scalps tingled with shock. That was especially true of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples. Some of them anxiously tried to get the banesouls to stop chasing Bai Xiaochun, but the banesouls were completely and utterly focused, and ignored everything else but him.



“Help! They’re trying to kill me!!” Bai Xiaochun fled for his life, screaming at the top of his lungs. Tears leaked out of the corners of his eyes; never could he have imagined that the medicinal pills he had concocted to attract banebeasts would, for some unknown reason, drag banesouls into the picture. “Dammit! I must have made a mistake in my concocting and produced another strange pill!”

The banesouls were getting closer and closer, and seemed to be devolving further into madness as they chased him. Bai Xiaochun finally gritted his teeth and, heart aching, tossed one of the four medicinal pills far off into the distance.

In that instant, the banesouls shivered, and their heads swiveled. Then, most of them shot off after the medicinal pill he’d just thrown. Bai Xiaochun was finally able to truly flee. Some distance away, he looked over his shoulder, shivering.

Behind him, the banesouls were fighting over the medicinal pill. Shockingly, the one who ended up getting the pill in the end was the girl in the white dress, who tossed the pill into her mouth as soon as she wrested control of it.

In that instant, the blankness in the girl’s eyes faded a bit. A strange glow appeared, and her expression turned even more icy. For some reason, she suddenly seemed to possess intelligence!

Slowly, the girl turned to look at Bai Xiaochun.

When their eyes met, Bai Xiaochun's scalp started tingling so hard it felt like it was going to explode. At the same moment, a faint, bizarre voice was transmitted into his ear.

“Come play with me, big bro.” All the hair on Bai Xiaochun's body stood on end. Turning around, he fled as fast as he could.

# Chapter 149: Whether Sect Uncle Bai Wants It To Or Not

---

“That’s not a banesoul, that’s an evil ghost!” Heart pounding with fear, Bai Xiaochun fled at top speed. Moments ago, when his gaze met the young girl’s, he had instantly been filled with a sensation of deadly crisis. The feeling had been so intense that it felt like every inch of his flesh and every drop of his blood was screaming in terror.

He was filled with the premonition that if he ran any slower, he would die!

That deathly feeling left him shaking visibly, panting, his eyes bloodshot as he pushed forward faster and faster, flying ever deeper into the depths of the Fallen Sword World.

The next day, he looked over his shoulder to confirm that he wasn’t being chased by any banesouls, especially the little girl. When he saw that he was alone, he let out a long sigh of relief. However, fear still lingered in his heart regarding the events of the previous day.

“Something was really fishy about that girl in the white dress!” he thought, scowling miserably. “At first she looked like all the other banesouls, but after she ate that strange pill, her aura completely changed! Just where exactly did I go wrong with that batch of pills?”

He thought about giving up on the idea, but the truth was that

his medicinal pill had attracted the banebeasts. In the end, he couldn't just give up that easily. Gritting his teeth, he went out to find more banebeasts to research. At the same time, he studied the medicine formula he had used. Three days later, after making some adjustments, he steeled himself and once again pulled out a pill furnace to start concocting.

This time, there wasn't any thunder, nor any other strange signs. Four violet medicinal pills appeared, which he carefully took outside to test, preparing ahead of time for what to do if banesouls showed up.

Soon, ripples filled the area as one banebeast after another appeared. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't dare to make a move on them. He flew away at top speed, and then studied the area carefully.

Before long, the medicinal pill had attracted over twenty banebeasts, and not a single banesoul had appeared. Finally, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief, and even started to get excited.

"It worked!" he exclaimed, laughing loudly. As he removed the paper talismans he had stuck all over himself, the glow of the shields faded, and he hurried over to the banebeasts. Soon, his wooden sword transformed into flashing beams of light as the fighting began.

One banebeast after another fell in death, and Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with wild delight as the streams of earthstring energy flew into his Dao bottle.

After slaughtering the entire group, he looked in satisfaction at the gray liquid inside the bottle. In a very short moment, he had added more liquid into the bottle than he had in the past several days.

Taking a deep breath, he headed to another area. There, he threw out another medicinal pill and sure enough, banebeasts began to flock to the area. Laughing heartily, Bai Xiaochun immediately began to cut them down.

Time passed. Because of the medicinal pills, the gray liquid in Bai Xiaochun's Dao bottle continued to build up at a shocking rate. Now he was collecting earthstring energy far more quickly than anyone else. A few days later, it had been a full month since Bai Xiaochun entered the Fallen Sword World. As for his Dao bottle, it was now eighty percent full of earthstring energy.

"Only twenty percent to go!" he thought, more excited than ever. He wasn't sure how others were faring in their collection efforts, but he doubted many of them had surpassed him.

However, being the perfectionist that he was, he decided that the best thing would be to fill ten percent in a single shot!

"I need more banebeasts!" Licking his lips, he headed further down into the Fallen Sword World until he found a wide-open plain. There, he took a deep breath and then pulled out two medicinal pills. Hoping to attract even more banebeasts than before, he crushed the pills and then scattered them around.

It didn't take long before the air rippled as numerous banebeasts appeared. Bai Xiaochun immediately began to attack them, causing rumbling booms to fill the area. Every banebeast he slew caused earthstring energy to stream into his Dao bottle.

Because of how he had crushed the pills, and also because of the favorable position he had chosen, which was close to the deepest parts of the Fallen Sword World, there were plenty of slumbering banebeasts in the area.

Soon, it wasn't a group of dozens that was converging on the area, it was closer to a hundred. Almost all of them were mid-level, with a few here and there that were high-level, the type that would normally require an entire group of Chosen to take down.

Bai Xiaochun's speed in killing the banebeasts couldn't match the speed with which new ones appeared on the scene. Soon, there were two hundred gathered in the area, and their numbers only continued to grow. Any cultivator who managed to catch sight of such a huge number of banebeasts would go wild with joy.

In fact, some of the disciples of the four sects did notice what was happening, and gathered on the periphery to snag whatever beasts they could. One of them was a young man who attacked with utter ruthlessness, and immediately caused quite a stir among the nearby Pill Stream Sect disciples. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun noticed him, and recognized him as the number one Chosen from the Pill Stream Sect, Fang Lin!

Bai Xiaochun wasn't too happy that he had drawn all these banebeasts here only to have other people slaughter and take them. However, considering that he couldn't even keep up with the growing numbers, he simply gave a cold harrumph and then ignored them.

Gradually, a group of over forty cultivators had gathered in the area. It was only at that point that they managed to get on equal footing with the banebeasts. Elated, they began to join forces to make things go even faster.

That was especially true of some of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples. When they got close to Bai Xiaochun, he made sure to take care of them, ensuring that their harvest was even greater than before.

Bai Xiaochun excitedly watched the earthstring liquid building up in his Dao bottle. Soon, it was ninety percent full. However, it was at that exact moment that more than ten beams of light suddenly appeared up in the air.

They wore matching robes, those of the Profound Stream Sect, and leading them was a burly man surrounded by swirling electricity.

The surrounding disciples' faces flickered, except for Fang Lin's. He simply continued to slaughter the banebeasts, not even bothering to look over.

“Lei Shan!”

“The number two Chosen of the Profound Stream Sect! Dammit! If he came by himself it might not be a big deal, but look at how many people he has with him!”

Even as everyone looked on with mixed expressions, Lei Shan glanced out over all the banebeasts, and his eyes lit up with joy. He’d heard from some fellow Profound Stream Sect disciples that a strange tide of banebeasts had appeared, which was why he had hurried over in this direction.

“Only forty percent of my bottle is empty. When it’s full, I can form the earthstring capture crystal. I can probably do that by killing all of these banebeasts here!” Lei Shan threw his head back and laughed uproariously. When the Profound Stream Sect disciples at his side realized what he intended to do, one of them, a long-faced young man, chuckled darkly and stepped forward.

“Listen up!” he bellowed to the disciples in the area. “If you’re not from the Profound Stream Sect, beat it immediately! This place is our territory now!” The disciples from the other three sects bristled with rage, while the Profound Stream Sect disciples began to laugh as they joined Lei Shan’s group. By that point, they were roughly thirty strong.

Under Lei Shan’s leadership, the group of thirty prepared drive everyone away, and fight with deadly force against any who resisted. Chaos quickly ensued.

“You have ten breaths of time of time to get the hell out of here,



and leave your Dao bottles behind!”

“If you don’t want to go, then be prepared to lose your life!” As the Profound Stream Sect disciples glared around them, the Blood Stream Sect disciples exchanged glances and then began to fall back.

Most of the Blood Stream Sect were on their own, like lone wolves, and didn’t want to provoke Lei Shan.

The Pill Stream Sect disciples were at a bit of a loss, and had no other choice than to fall back. Lei Shan hesitated for a moment when he realized that Fang Lin was in the crowd. He still suspected that the terrifying magical massacre which had been carried out a month before had been enacted by Fang Lin, and thus, didn’t wish to provoke him.

Because of the terrifying nature of the battlefield he had come across, he decided to simply let the Pill Stream Sect disciples leave. As for Fang Lin, he resolved not to do anything to offend him personally.

As the Blood Stream Sect and Pill Stream Sect disciples fled, the Spirit Stream Sect disciples turned to see what Bai Xiaochun would do.

Bai Xiaochun was incensed, but the group led by Lei Shan was simply too large. He only had about ten people on his side, and if they got into a fight, he knew that while he might be able to make it out unscathed, they would have a harder time. There would

likely be many serious injuries and even deaths.

“Alright, let’s go,” he said. “It’s just a flood of beasts, after all. Your Sect Uncle will go start another one for you!” Gritting his teeth, he was just about to leave when Lei Shan looked over and suddenly laughed.

The Blood Stream Sect disciples were ferocious, and he didn’t have any wish to tangle with them. As for Fang Lin from the Pill Stream Sect, he also preferred to steer clear of him. But when it came to the Spirit Stream Sect, once he realized it was Bai Xiaochun he was dealing with, as well as a few ordinary disciples, he recalled the information from his sect about Bai Xiaochun, and his expression became one of derision.

“You people from the Spirit Stream Sect can leave,” he said, his eyes flickering with killing intent, “but your Dao bottles stay behind! Comply, or don’t even think about leaving!” The Spirit Stream Sect disciples’ faces fell, and Bai Xiaochun’s anger grew.

“You wanna steal my animals and then rob my Dao bottle? You people are nothing but bullies!”

With a cold snort, Lei Shan began to fly toward the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, joined by the rest of the Profound Stream Sect, who were cackling viciously. “If you’re being bullied, you should blame the fact that you don’t have any powerful experts on your side!”

“Sect Uncle Bai!”

“Sect Uncle Bai, what do we do now?!” The Spirit Stream Sect disciples were trembling in anxiety, and Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were completely bloodshot. Suddenly, he lifted his right hand, within which could be seen a black medicinal pill, the very same pill which could attract bane souls.

Expression somber, eyes bloodshot, he turned to the Spirit Stream Sect disciples and said, “Just wait until I throw out this medicinal pill, and then you guys–”

However, before he could finish speaking, the surrounding Spirit Stream Sect disciples gasped, the terror on their faces vastly exceeding their terror at seeing the Profound Stream Sect closing in. They immediately began to flee at top speed.

“Is that the legendary Aphrodisiac Pill!?”

“Heavens! No wonder he can control the banebeasts!”

“Sect Uncle Bai is a god! The only thing that determines whether that pill works on the banebeasts is whether Sect Uncle Bai wants it to or not! Let’s get out of here! If we’re too slow, we’re dead!”

# Chapter 150: Big Bro Has Something Else To Do....

---

The Spirit Stream Sect fled in abject terror. The Profound Stream Sect wanted to block their path, but no threat could cause them to tremble like Bai Xiaochun's medicinal pills could.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped at the sight of his fellow disciples fleeing in such a fashion. Worried that he had pulled out the wrong pill, he looked down to confirm which pill he was holding. Clearing his throat, he then gave a mighty shout as he launched the pill into the air. It shot up and then exploded, becoming swirling black mist that spread out in all directions.

Lei Shan frowned, and the Profound Stream Sect disciples scattered, worried that the mist might be toxic. As for the banebeasts in the area, as soon as they caught a whiff of the destroyed medicinal pill, their eyes lit up with madness, and they began to howl.

At the same time, Lei Shan's eyes flickered as if with lightning as he watched Bai Xiaochun attempting to flee at high speed.

Snorting coldly, he said, "Think you can leave just like that? Leave your Dao bottle behind!"

With that, he flicked his sleeve, causing thunder to boom, shoving the black mist away from him.

Then he shot after Bai Xiaochun, moving with incredible speed. Lightning danced around him, and flames burned beneath his feet. As he closed in, he waved his right finger through the air. Rumbling could be heard as a sea of flames appeared, which then rose up into a huge wall that blocked Bai Xiaochun's path. Within the wall of flames, bolts of lightning appeared which then shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

When the Profound Stream Sect disciples saw this, their eyes glittered with derision. As far as they were concerned, Bai Xiaochun was dreaming if he thought he could escape from Lei Shan.

“A rogue Foundation Establishment cultivator once chased Elder Brother Lei Shan for seven days but never caught him. Even Eldest Brother Nine-Isles praised his speed before.”

“And then there's his flame lightning magic. Elder Brother Lei Shan has already reached the pinnacle. Nobody in this generation could possibly match up to him. Bai Xiaochun is courting death!”

Even as the Profound Stream Sect mocked him, Bai Xiaochun's anxiety increased. He knew that the banesouls could show up at any moment, and that the best thing to do was leave this place as quickly as possible. Seeing that his path was blocked, his eyes flickered, and he slammed into the incoming bolts of lightning.

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

As soon as the lightning bolts made contact with him, they

shattered into countless sparks of electricity that scattered in all directions. Bai Xiaochun, on the other hand, didn't seem to have even a mark on him. He continued on to the wall of flames, and when he hit that, it exploded too, and he passed right through.

“Impossible!” Lei Shan said, his eyes widening with disbelief and shock. He was very familiar with his own magical techniques, and was confident that other than Nine-Isles, Ghostfang, Song Que and Fang Lin, there were no Qi Condensation disciples who could pass through his flame lightning unharmed.

And yet, unexpectedly, Bai Xiaochun had done exactly that.

“This guy is—” Before he could finish speaking, an indescribable sensation of deadly crisis washed over him. Looking over his shoulder, he saw the air rippling off in the distance as numerous banesouls appeared, rushing in his direction with expressions of longing.

“Banesouls!!” he gasped. Just as he was preparing to flee, his heart was struck with deathly terror.

“There are so many!! Heavens!!” There weren't just three or four banesouls approaching. The air rippled with constant fluctuations as dozens of them closed in, with even more behind them. From the look of it, there might be a hundred in total.

Among the banesouls was a sinister young girl in a white dress, holding a bear. Her eyes swirled with underworldly light, and although her face was expressionless, Lei Shan and the dozens of

Profound Stream Sect disciples with him could hear chuckling in their ears.

It was a bizarre, sinister laughter that instantly set their hearts pounding. Further off among the crowd of banebeasts, Fang Lin's eyes went wide, and he began to flee, panting.

Bai Xiaochun was further off, running for his life. He could also hear the chuckling, and it left his scalp numb with fear. Wings appeared behind the black wok on his back, and he blasted off at top speed.

“Hmph! You think you can just steal my banebeasts? Those are Lord Bai's banebeasts! Nobody can just take them away!” With a cold snort, he pushed forward even faster.

Lei Shan swallowed hard, and his face was totally ashen. Having no time to pay any heed to his fellow disciples in the horde of beasts, he fled.

About this time, the girl in the white dress shot out ahead of the horde of banesouls to be the first to arrive in the area where the medicinal pill had exploded. There, she took a deep breath, causing the surrounding black mist to be sucked in through her eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.

At the same time, the surrounding banebeasts began to tremble and then explode, transforming into ash. As for the few dozen Profound Stream Sect disciples, their bodies were completely beyond their own control. White mist began to seep out of their

own eyes, ears, noses, and mouths, and was sucked away with the black mist by the girl.

“Come play with me, big bros....” she said. No longer was her face expressionless. Her lips twitched into something like a smile, a terrifying smile that would cause any cultivator who saw it to tremble.

Her voice reverberated through the air, matchlessly sinister, echoing out in all directions. The disciples of the Profound Stream Sect felt as if their souls were being ripped out of their bodies. Their flesh and blood withered, and they became like stiff corpses which hopped over to the girl’s side, where they began to lurch and dance as if they were playing with her.

Their withered bodies and stiff limbs provided a bizarre scene, and from a distance, Lei Shan and Fang Lin looked on with ashen faces. Hearts trembling, they began to flee in terror.

“What kind of banesoul is that?!”

“The sect’s information didn’t list anything about banesouls like that. It can even talk! That’s impossible!”

Lei Shan and Fang Lin were both shaking as they fled in different directions, resorting to life-saving magics to flee as fast as possible.

The other banesouls around the little girl weren’t able to absorb any of the black mist, and soon they calmed down, and began to



float aimlessly with blank expressions on their faces.

The little girl stood there in their midst, looking completely bizarre. By now, her eyes were pitch black. Momentarily ignoring the fleeing Lei Shan and Fang Lin, she slowly turned in the direction Bai Xiaochun had fled in. Then her lips twitched into something that almost looked like a smile, and she flew after Lei Shan.

Deep in the Fallen Sword World, Bai Xiaochun flew along at top speed for two days before finally slowing down. That little girl in the white dress left him shivering in fear. However, as soon as he thought about how he had filled his Dao bottle by more than ninety percent, he realized that he only needed a bit more earthstring energy to form the earthstring capture crystal. Therefore, he began to carefully use his medicinal pills to attract more banebeasts to collect the last bit of earthstring energy he needed.

Two days later, he had gathered a few dozen banebeasts in a remote location. After slaughtering the entire group, his Dao bottle was completely filled with earthstring energy. The gray liquid began to bubble and boil, and then solidify. Soon, cracking sounds could be heard, and the bottle shattered.

A gray crystal was revealed, which Bai Xiaochun grabbed. Almost instantly, he felt a connection between himself and the world around him, a resonance that he hadn't felt before. This crystal was like a key that unlocked the barrier between himself and the world.

“It worked!” he exclaimed. He now felt more confident than ever that if he absorbed enough energy, he would be able to reach Foundation Establishment. However, he knew that he shouldn’t go about it carelessly; he needed to find a safe place to go through the process. After all, if someone interfered with the process, causing it to fail, he would regret it for the rest of his life.

“Foundation Establishment. Foundation Establishment! Hahaha!” Suppressing his excitement, he was about to begin his search for a safe location when suddenly, he felt a chill run down his back and up his neck. Without even thinking about it, he looked over his shoulder, and saw a face directly behind him!

It was a little girl’s face, her lips twisted into a bizarre smile!

Everything around him was deathly quiet. Bai Xiaochun’s eyes widened, and his hair began to stand on end. The flame of his life force flickered a bit, as his intuition told him that this girl was extremely dangerous!

“Come play with me, big bro,” she said in a sinister voice. In that same instant, a cold wind blew past, and Bai Xiaochun suddenly realized that the girl wasn’t holding the skinless, blood-colored bear any more.

She was holding something else, and when Bai Xiaochun realized what it was, his heart began to pound. It was a tiny cultivator, skinned like the bear had been. Although it wasn’t easy to tell at first, it was none other than Lei Shan!

The majestic number two Chosen from the Profound Stream Sect was being held in the arms of this little girl. Clearly, he wasn't dead either! He was trembling from the pain, and his tongue had been removed, making it impossible for him to speak.

Bai Xiaochun's mouth and throat went dry, and he began to back away, shaking physically. All of a sudden, he realized that he had no idea how long the girl had been following him.

"Um, big bro has something else to do right now," he said, feeling like he was about to cry. "Why don't you go find somebody else to play with? There's a guy named Song Que, and another called Nine-Isles. Oh right. There's also Fang Lin. Y-y-you can go play with them, alright?" However, the girl continued to advance on him, chuckling. As she neared, she suddenly began to breathe in deeply.

Instantly, Bai Xiaochun's mind began to spin, and he felt his life force stirring, as though it were about to be ripped out of him. At that moment, any other person really would have lost their life force.

But Bai Xiaochun's fleshly body was powerful. The silver light of the Undying Live Forever Technique flickered in resistance. Bai Xiaochun let out a piercing shriek as the sensation of imminent death washed over him. Without any hesitation, he pulled out his third strange pill and threw it off into the distance.

In that instant, the girl's eyes flickered with mysterious light. Happily ignoring Bai Xiaochun, she went off after the medicinal pill.

Face ashen, Bai Xiaochun took advantage of the moment to flee as fast as he could.

The girl didn't chase him. After retrieving the medicinal pill, she put it in her mouth, and her eyes grew even blacker than before. A bizarre smile appeared on her face as she turned her head to look in the direction Bai Xiaochun had fled.

# Chapter 151: You Wanna Fight Me, Bai Xiaochun?!

---

Two hours later, Bai Xiaochun was still fleeing, and simultaneously wallowing in self-pity. He already had his earthstring capture crystal, and all he needed was a chance to hole up somewhere and use it, but the little girl wouldn't stop chasing him.

When he thought back to the terror and danger he had just faced, his heart trembled. Around nightfall, he looked around and didn't see anyone in the area. Huffing and puffing, he finally found a cave in a mountain, where he sat down cross-legged. Looking around vigilantly, he was trying to decide if this really was the best place to make his attempt at Foundation Establishment, when suddenly the air in front of him began to ripple.

It lasted only a moment, and almost didn't seem to be something happening with the world around him, but rather, his own eyes. When things returned to normal, someone was standing right there in front of him.

It was none other than the girl in the white dress, staring at him with her black eyes.

“Don't go, big bro. Come play with me....”

Bai Xiaochun nearly collapsed. Eyes crimson, he performed an incantation gesture, unleashing spiritual power to form a large violet cauldron which rumbled forward.

Even as the ground quaked, he shot up into the air. When he looked down below, he found that the girl was nowhere to be seen. Apparently, everything from moments ago had been an illusion.

“Dammit!” he growled, expression unsightly. Something about the whole situation seemed strange, and Bai Xiaochun was starting to speculate that perhaps the bizarre little girl had used some sort of magical technique on him.

No longer in the mood to stay in place, he gritted his teeth and continued onward. After going along for about two hours, he saw three cultivators up ahead, engaged in fierce fighting. Suddenly, he stopped in place.

A moment ago, when he’d caught sight of them, they had been alone. But now, he saw the girl in the white dress. She was staring at him with a slight smile, a smile that grew wider and wider until her mouth opened into a gaping maw as she shot toward him.

Scalp going numb, he unleashed the power of his cultivation base. His right hand clenched into a fist, and the Undying Live Forever Technique erupted out. His fist strike caused everything to shake. However, the girl suddenly vanished, and the three cultivators off in the distance looked on in astonishment as Bai Xiaochun madly punched a nearby boulder.

When they saw the boulder collapse into rubble, they gasped and took to flight.

Bai Xiaochun stood there quietly for a moment before gritting his teeth and proceeding along.

During the following two days, he saw the girl in the white dress over and over again. Even when he closed his eyes to meditate, he would see her. He was reaching a point of complete exhaustion.

The situation only continued to grow worse. At first, he would see her every two hours or so. But now, it happened every three hundred breaths of time. At this rate, he would never be able to reach Foundation Establishment.

During the two days which passed, he ran into other disciples, even ones from the Spirit Stream Sect. However, the girl in the white dress would always show up, although no one else saw her.

On evening of the second day, Bai Xiaochun's eyes were completely bloodshot, and he could sense that he was reaching his limit. He even felt as if his life force were beyond his own control, and might float away at any time. He was light-headed, and was so dizzy he felt like he might fall over.

"It's gonna happen again at any moment...." he murmured. Forgetting about fleeing, he sat down on a boulder and clenched his hands into fists. He had one more strange pill left, and yet he didn't dare to use it on the girl. For some reason, he had the feeling that the reason he wasn't dead yet was because of that very medicinal pill.

If he threw it out and the girl got it, he might meet the same fate

as Lei Shan. The mere thought of that seemed to be a powerful warning to him to not casually concoct pills any more.

“It’s like I’m drifting between reality and illusion,” he thought. “I guess I could treat it as if I’ve been poisoned. In that case, maybe I should make an antidote to heal myself!”

Even as he sat thinking about the matter, a beam of light appeared off in the distance. As it drew close to Bai Xiaochun, it slowed to halt, and a young man appeared.

“Eee?” He was from the Blood Stream Sect, and looked very much like a silkpants. Looking over at Bai Xiaochun with an excited expression, he looked down at the Feng Shui compass he held in his hand, the needle of which was pointing toward Bai Xiaochun and glowing with a bright light.

“I can’t believe you already collected enough earthstring energy to form an earthstring crystal!!

“Hahaha! I guess it’s destiny that I, Xu Xiaoshan, will be the first to reach Foundation Establishment!” This young man was none other than Xu Xiaoshan from the Blood Stream Sect, and he was looking at Bai Xiaochun with visible excitement.

Bai Xiaochun was already irritated, and based on his calculations, he knew it would only be about ten breaths of time before the girl appeared again. “Mind your own business, asshole!”



“I know you! You’re Bai Xiaochun, the supposed trump card of the Spirit Stream Sect. Well, you’re obviously pretty weak right now. The flame of your life force looks like it might flicker out at any moment. That means Xu Xiaoshan has had a good opportunity handed right to him!

“Bai Xiaochun, I know you have an earthstring capture crystal. How about we work out a deal? Let me use that crystal for a bit, okay? What do you say?” Eyes flickering with greed, Xu Xiaoshan threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Speeding toward Bai Xiaochun, he performed an incantation gesture, causing eight magical devices to appear around him. Glittering light radiated out as Xu Xiaoshan waved his hand, sending them shooting toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked up coldly at Xu Xiaoshan, and was just about to make a move when, all of a sudden, his eyes swam, and the girl in the white dress appeared, standing right next to Xu Xiaoshan. There she was, her smile widening into a gaping maw.

It was at that very moment that Xu Xiaoshan suddenly screamed and backed up as fast as he could. Terror filled his eyes, and he began to tremble violently.

“A sentient banesoul! Heavens! How could there possibly be sentient banesouls here? Weren’t they all exterminated? Dammit! That banesoul’s got its eye on you. No wonder you look so weak. You’ve been cursed! You’re dead!” Taking a deep breath, he backed up even more, simultaneously lifting his right hand to produce an ancient jade pendant that had an orange spot on it, which almost looked like a blood stain. As soon as Xu Xiaoshan pulled it out, he

breathed a sigh of relief and then fell back further.

Down below, Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he cried out, "You can see her too?! Hey, what's that thing in your hand!?"

Bai Xiaochun had just witnessed the girl in the white dress turning to look at Xu Xiaoshan. However, as soon as Xu Xiaoshan took out the jade piece, the girl's expression flickered, and she fled in the opposite direction.

Xu Xiaoshan didn't bother to respond to Bai Xiaochun, and instead focused on fleeing as quickly as possible. However, before he could get very far, Bai Xiaochun snapped into motion. His wings appeared behind him, and he shot forward to appear directly in front of Xu Xiaoshan, where he clenched his fist as if to unleash a punch.

"Xu Xiaoshan! How about we work out a deal? Why don't you let me use that jade piece for a bit? What do you say?"

Hands flashing with an incantation gesture, Xu Xiaoshan summoned eight magical items, which he sent to defend himself. "You're lucky I didn't take your stuff. How dare you try to rob me! You're cursed, hanging on death's door! What gives you the guts to make a move?!"

Silver light flickered around Bai Xiaochun as his fist made contact with Xu Xiaoshan's magical items.

A huge boom echoed out, and the magical items cracked into pieces. Bai Xiaochun was like a gale force wind speeding directly toward the shocked Xu Xiaoshan. Xu Xiaoshan viciously waved his hand, sending his beaded bracelet off of his wrist. Instantly, it transformed into eighteen corpses, each one of which emanated power equivalent to the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation. Bursting with auras of death, they simultaneously attacked.

This was Bai Xiaochun's first time seeing corpse manipulation magic like this. Shockingly, all of these corpses had [long gray hair](#) that was black at the roots, as though the hair were slowly turning black.

In Chinese stories that have zombies or animated corpses, it's relatively common to identify their power level based on the color of their hair.

Each and every one seemed completely extraordinary.

A massive boom echoed out as the big wok on Bai Xiaochun's back shattered. However, he received no injuries whatsoever. Instead, his hands waved through the air as a shocking control power appeared, filling the area, grabbing ahold of the corpses and making it impossible for them to move. They even began to tremble and emit cracking sounds.

Xu Xiaoshan made a hissing sound as both of his hands waved through the air.

His left hand summoned nine bronze coffins. As they flew out,

they grew large and larger, emanating intense pressure onto Bai Xiaochun.

His right hand caused a bottle gourd to appear, which spit out a huge blast of gravel toward Bai Xiaochun.

Next, he swung his head, causing his hair to flip out. Several small bells flew into the air, which transformed into shadowy figures that sped toward Bai Xiaochun.

Most shocking of all was that he next opened his mouth and spat out a blood-colored fan. The fan waved through the air, causing a 300-meter wide blood mist to spring up. It instantly transformed into a spell formation, which emanated intense roaring sounds as countless razor-sharp talons appeared and headed toward Bai Xiaochun.

“I have magical items and refined corpses! You wanna fight me, Bai Xiaochun?!” Laughing complacently, Xu Xiaoshan slapped his bag of holding to produce more than twenty bottles of high quality medicinal pills, which he swallowed in rapid succession, instantly restoring all of the spiritual energy he had just spent. If there had been a third person present to witness what was happening, that person would have been completely flabbergasted.

However, it was at this point that the divine crane materialized around Bai Xiaochun, transforming into a buckler that swirled around him. Then, a black flash could be seen as black light spread out all over his body.

He smacked his bag of holding, causing hundreds of paper talismans to appear, which he slapped all over himself. In the blink of an eye, over a hundred shield layers had sprung up, creating a 150-meter-thick defense.

“I have plenty of defensive talismans,” he said proudly. “You dare to fight me with those crappy magical items of yours?” The corpses were sent tumbling away. The blast of gravel couldn’t even come close to penetrating the shields, and most of the gravel was sent rebounding away. The nine bronze coffins were also sent crashing to the ground, completely incapable of causing any damage.

Xu Xiaoshan’s eyes went wide as he stared in complete astonishment. When he fought people, he always relied on the large numbers of magical items and refined corpses at his disposal. This was his first time ever meeting someone like Bai Xiaochun, someone who was actually on the same level as himself.

Although he wasn’t using magical items, when Xu Xiaoshan thought about how valuable those hundreds of paper talismans were, his heart trembled.

“The information said Bai Xiaochun was mysterious and powerful, but it never said he was rich!!” Xu Xiaoshan chuckled bitterly. He knew exactly how terrifying of a figure he himself was, so he naturally realized how terrifying Bai Xiaochun was. In fact, the sight of so many paper talismans left his eyes glowing with envy. After all, magical items required spiritual power to operate, whereas paper talismans required almost none at all. The power they needed was stored inside the talismans themselves.

They were expensive, and only worked for a limited time; even Xu Xiaoshan regarded them as a bit of a luxury.

Blinking, he suddenly realized that Bai Xiaochun was truly formidable. In fact, he was even worthy of admiration to some degree. After a moment of thought, he tossed the jade pendant over to Bai Xiaochun. “Dammit, Xu Xiaoshan has never given in to anyone. You’re the first, Bai Xiaochun. I know you need this thing, so go ahead and take it. But it’s not a gift! You have to give it back when you’re done!”

## Chapter 152: You're Shameless! No, You're Shameless!

---

After throwing over the jade piece, Xu Xiaoshan turned to leave. He had already made up his mind that, after he got back to the sect, he would ask his father and mother for more capital with which to acquire paper talismans. In the future, that was how he would make a name for himself, not magical items. Using paper talismans would be far more awe-inspiring.

Xu Xiaoshan was a natural-born silkpants. He didn't really care what his sect thought about what he did; if he liked someone, he made friends with them. If he didn't like them, he would beat them up. As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, he was reluctant to admit it, but he actually liked him.

Of course, if he had overcome Bai Xiaochun in a fight, he wouldn't have hesitated for even a moment to rob him of his earthstring capture crystal. However, since he couldn't defeat him in combat, he decided that the next best thing was to try to con him.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun grabbed the jade piece, a wonderful feeling swept through him. His exhaustion vanished, and he could see everything clearly. It was almost like he had been trapped underwater, unable to breathe, and had just burst out into the open air.

However, it seemed odd that Xu Xiaoshan would simply give him the jade piece so casually. After a moment of thought, he realized that he might have been cheated in some way. Before Xu Xiaoshan

could get very far away, Bai Xiaochun called out, “Hold on. I don’t like taking advantage of people. Let me give you these two little treasures in exchange.”

Slapping his bag of holding, he produced two flying swords that both had twofold spirit enhancements. Secretly spreading some of the aura of the final strange pill onto them, he tossed them over.

“They’re not worth much, but hey, have fun with them.”

The twofold spirit enhanced swords flew over to Xu Xiaoshan, whose eyes went wide as soon as he grabbed them.

“Twofold spirit enhancements?” he thought, swallowing hard. “And he hands them over just like that? Have fun with them?!” Although he didn’t view twofold spirit enhanced magical items as something completely priceless, they were still relatively rare among Qi Condensation cultivators. The most telling thing was how casually Bai Xiaochun had tossed them over to him, which made it very obvious how deep his pockets were.

Suddenly Xu Xiaoshan realized he had even more to learn from Bai Xiaochun than he had initially realized. To casually hand out spirit enhanced magical items was a truly impressive way to make a name for oneself. Having reached this point in his train of thought, he looked more closely at Bai Xiaochun, and realized that he liked him even more. He sighed.

“Alright, look, Bai Xiaochun. Considering how nice you’ve been, I feel bad for trying to con you. If you use that jade pendant by



itself, it's pretty much useless. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, it will simply stop working, and even have a backlash effect." With another sigh, he tossed a second jade pendant to Bai Xiaochun. "Use them together and you'll have a long term solution to that banesoul's curse."

Catching the second jade pendant, Bai Xiaochun narrowed his eyes at how devious and cunning Xu Xiaoshan was. As he watched him turn to leave, Bai Xiaochun suddenly thought to himself that despite everything that had just occurred, Xu Xiaoshan didn't really seem to be a bad person. Gritting his teeth, he called out, "Hey, hold on. Alright, listen, Xu Xiaoshan. Since you've been so nice, I feel bad for conning you. Give me back those two flying swords."

Xu Xiaoshan stopped in his tracks, his eyes widening. Pulling out the two flying swords, he examined them carefully, but couldn't find anything about them that seemed out of the ordinary. However, not daring to hold on to them for any longer, he threw them back to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat and then produced another set of two swords, which he threw back to Xu Xiaoshan.

Xu Xiaoshan had an odd expression on his face as he looked over at Bai Xiaochun. He wasn't sure exactly what was wrong with the first set of swords, but he could well imagine that, if Bai Xiaochun hadn't said anything, he might have ended up walking into a disaster.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times as he and Xu Xiaoshan looked

at each other.

After another long moment passed, Xu Xiaoshan sighed, eyes shining brightly. Earlier, he had only been pretending to like Bai Xiaochun, but by this point, he really did like him.

“It’s not very often that I get along with someone as well as I do with you. Alright, listen, Bai Xiaochun. There’s actually a mnemonic that goes along with those two jade pendants, which is the only way to use them properly. Without the mnemonic, they’ll create a field of light that will protect you from that banesoul, but after a while, the light will fade away and leave a sealing mark on your cultivation base that will prevent you from using it for a whole month.” With a wry smile, Xu Xiaoshan tossed a jade slip over to Bai Xiaochun.

“You scoundrel!!” Bai Xiaochun said with a gasp. If he had used the jade pendants in the middle of trying to reach Foundation Establishment, only to have his cultivation base sealed, he would have lost an entire month of time. He might even have lost his chance at Foundation Establishment.

“You’re just as bad!” Xu Xiaoshan replied. Then he coughed dryly. “Well, I’m from the Blood Stream Sect and you’re from the Spirit Stream Sect. We’re supposed to be against each other.” By this point, he was being completely honest, which was a rare thing for him. The truth was that he had never encountered anyone like Bai Xiaochun before.

“Alright,” Bai Xiaochun said. “Since you’re being so honest, then I’ll stop conning you. You know those magical items you used

against me in the fight? I stained them all with a medicinal aroma that will attract banesouls.” Feeling a bit awkward, he lowered his voice and concluded, “You should probably change your clothes too.”

Xu Xiaoshan’s eyes went wide; after quickly checking his bag of holding and his clothing, he looked back at Bai Xiaochun with gritted teeth. “Y-y-you!! You’re completely shameless!”

“You’re just as bad!” Bai Xiaochun said, glaring back at him.

The two of them looked at each other for a moment, then both of them burst out laughing.

“I hope we meet again soon,” Xu Xiaoshan said with sincerity. Then he turned and sped off into the distance.

Once he was out of sight, he changed clothes, his heart thumping with lingering fear. As far as he was concerned, Bai Xiaochun was as much of a scoundrel as himself, which meant that he had to be very careful dealing with him in the future.

Bai Xiaochun was also sighing. Although Xu Xiaoshan was from the Blood Stream Sect, he still seemed like a good person to be friends with.

“Except, he’s profoundly crafty, definitely not as honest as me. I really have to be careful dealing with him in the future. Ai. I guess I’m just too honest.” Shaking his head, he swished his sleeve and

sped off.

After inspecting the jade pendants thoroughly, he used the mnemonic from the jade slip to unleash their power. Moments later, a shimmering field of light appeared around him.

The field of light soon became invisible, and could only be detected via divine sense. However, as far as banesouls were concerned, it made it completely impossible to approach Bai Xiaochun.

Over the course of the following six hours, the girl in the white dress appeared several times. However, every time she got close, she was repelled. Her face distorted with rage, and she screamed shrilly, but it was still impossible to get close to Bai Xiaochun.

After so many failures, she begrudgingly faded away and didn't return. At that point, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. Convinced that the jade pendants had actually worked, he sank to the bottom of a remote lake and dug out a temporary immortal's cave. There, he sat down cross-legged to meditate.

After performing one final test to make sure that the jade pendants would drive away the banesouls, his eyes flickered with anticipation, and he pulled out the gray earthstring capture crystal.

“Although I'm starting a few days later than I'd planned, I can still be the first person to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment!” With that, he unleashed the spiritual power of the

great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation, circulated it once, and then sent it surging into the gray crystal.

The crystal was like a bottomless pit that sucked in all of his spiritual power. Then, it began to emit a gray glow which grew more intense by the moment, and soon caused powerful rumbling sounds to emanate out.

The crystal began to slowly burn, transforming into a gray mist that Bai Xiaochun absorbed through his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. After more than thirty breaths of time, the crystal shook slightly and then vanished, causing massive amounts of gray mist to surge into Bai Xiaochun's body.

His eyes were beginning to grow bloodshot as the gray mist poured into him, permeating his qi vessels, swirling throughout his entire body. At the same time, pain ripped through him; the gray mist almost seemed to be taking shape, like iron chains that scraped against his flesh and blood.

The pain caused him to shudder, but compared to the pain he had endured when cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique, it wasn't worth mentioning. Bai Xiaochun didn't so much as let out a cold snort. Gritting his teeth, he waited until the final bit of mist bored into him. When the tail end of the mist connected with the mist which had first entered him, it created something like a circle.

The moment that circle formed, rumbling sounds filled Bai Xiaochun's mind, shaking him down to his soul.

The spiritual river that was his cultivation base began to churn, blasting through all parts of his body, seemingly chaotic and without shape. However, closer examination revealed that the spiritual power was actually transforming into a whirlpool.

That whirlpool was none other than the beginning of a Tideflow!

This was the most critical aspect of Earthstring Foundation Establishment!

Spiritual power flowed, transforming into a Tideflow. The mist became liquid, the Earthstring Dao Foundation was formed, and mortality was severed away!

Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked up, blue veins bulging out on his neck and face. Trembling, he hoarsely shouted, "Tideflow!"

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Instantly, the whirlpool began to rotate with more intensity, transforming into something like a black hole that sucked away all of the earthstring energy inside of him. Of course, that little bit wasn't even one one-thousandth of what was required.

However, as long as that whirlpool was formed, it would automatically absorb the earthstring energy which had built up over the past sixty-year-cycle in the Fallen Sword World!

Instantly, streams of earthstring energy began to emerge from the walls of the immortal's cave and rush toward Bai Xiaochun.

Soon, the lake above him was bubbling and boiling as massive amounts of earthstring energy began to surge into motion. The sky of the Fallen Sword World trembled as earthstring energy flowed toward Bai Xiaochun from all directions.

The disciples of the four sects who were in various locations in the Fallen Sword World all looked up. Some were confused, others shocked, other shaken. All sorts of mixed emotions could be seen, even disbelief.

“A Tideflow! Heavens! That's an Earthstring Foundation Establishment Tideflow!!”

“Who is it? It's barely been a month, and someone's already formed an earthstring capture crystal and begun Foundation Establishment?!”

“Is it Song Que? Ghostfang? Nine-Isles? Or is it Fang Lin!?!?”

# Chapter 153: Let The Tideflow Begin!

---

The lake above Bai Xiaochun seethed and churned as it became a huge whirlpool, tugging relentlessly at the energy in the sky and the land of the world around him. Endless quantities of earthstring energy poured into it, causing the whirlpool to grow larger and larger until it was like a massive tornado rising all the way up into the heavens!

From a distance, the tornado looked so awe-inspiring that anyone who caught sight of it gasped in astonishment.

In the moment that the tornado connected with the sky above, a spinning vortex formed that was the tell-tale sign of a Tideflow!

“Bai Xiaochun!” Not too far away from where Bai Xiaochun was in the middle of reaching Foundation Establishment, Xu Xiaoshan stopped in midair and looked at the surging earthstring energy. Only a Tideflow could cause heaven and earth to react in such a way. Xu Xiaoshan took a deep breath, and his eyes began to glitter brightly. “So, he is the first one who actually completed his earthstring capture crystal.”

Deep within the Fallen Sword World, Shangguan Tianyou stood there, nine flying swords swirling around him in a sword formation. His right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and the nine swords pierced through the air, delivering a powerful killing blow that instantly cut down a high-level banebeast. Ignoring the finger-thick stream of earthstring energy that flew into his Dao bottle, he stared off into the distance at the churning streams of earthstring energy.



“Who is it?!” he thought. “Dammit! If Fang Lin and I hadn’t fought each other and both ended up injured, I definitely could have been faster!” Eyes bloodshot, he looked down at his Dao bottle, which was now eighty percent full. Gritting his teeth, he gave up on searching for banebeasts and instead began to hunt disciples from the other three sects.

The provocation of someone reaching Foundation Establishment before him left Shangguan Tianyou in a killing mood!

At the same time, in another area, Fang Lin from the Pill Stream Sect noiselessly appeared in front of a Profound Stream Sect disciple. The disciple’s eyes went wide for only a moment before his head exploded. Fang Lin took his Dao bottle, then looked over at the conglomeration of earthstring energy. His eyes shone with a bright light.

“I got Lei Shan’s Dao bottle after he was taken by the banesouls, as well as the bottles of everyone I’ve ambushed. And yet, this guy beat me to it....” He looked down at his Dao bottle, which was almost full, and his eyes glittered. With that, he sped off into the distance, preparing to select a place for his own Foundation Establishment.

In another area was the number one Chosen from the Profound Stream Sect, Nine-Isles. His hands were dripping with blood, and he was surrounded by seven or eight corpses, all of whom were other disciples that he had personally slain. “These should be enough!”

Other than those handful of Chosen who everyone despaired of ever surpassing, there were a few other disciples within the Fallen Sword World who were also motivated enough to pick up their speed.

And the only way to do that was by killing other disciples!

It only took a moment for Bai Xiaochun's Tideflow to transform the entire Fallen Sword World into a battleground. Almost instantly, fierce fighting broke out everywhere.

The death toll grew, and bloodcurdling screams echoed out everywhere.

Originally, there had been about four hundred people present, but by now that number had already been reduced by about half.

Hou Yunfei was spattered in blood, his hair in complete disarray. In the Fallen Sword World, he was not considered to be one of the spectacular Chosen, but rather, just an ordinary disciple. However, that didn't mean he was any less vicious than anyone else. During the course of the past month, he had cut down over ten enemy disciples.

Working with other Spirit Stream Sect disciples, he had killed many banebeasts as well. As a result, his Dao bottle was more than seventy percent full. When he saw the earthstring energy surging in the distance, he took a deep breath.

“Is that you, Xiaochun? You’re definitely going to succeed in your Foundation Establishment. I have to work harder!” With that, he turned and sped off into the distance.

Beihan Lie was in the middle region of the Fallen Sword World, where he was fighting like a fiend. His battle with Lei Shan had caused his name to rise in shocking fashion, until almost everyone knew who he was.

Although he hadn’t been able to secure a clear victory, the battle ensured that his name was sent rocketing to new heights. He was the new black horse among the four sects, just like certain other rising stars from the other three sects. They were quickly becoming the type that ordinary disciples had no hope of ever catching up to.

Of course, no one knew how bitterly Beihan Lie had toiled to acquire such glory. The truth was that without Bai Xiaochun, he wouldn’t be what he was now.

“I’m definitely going to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment, and wipe away all the humiliation!” Howling inwardly, he selected another target and began to fight fiercely.

By this point in the trial by fire, there were no weaklings among the surviving disciples. All of them had various powerful techniques and tactics to use, and soon, the fighting grew even more intense.

Within the depths of the Fallen Sword World, in an area filled

with swirling mists and countless banebeasts, as well as numerous cultivators, two figures could be seen locked in combat.

A closer look revealed that they were both young women. One was Gongsun Wan'er, and the other was Zhao Rou from the Pill Stream Sect. Both of them were exquisite beauties, but right now, both of them were in bad shape. Murderous auras surrounded them as they fought what was already their seventh battle.

During the past month, they had fought each other every time they met, almost as if they had a personal grudge with each other. Although neither could gain the upper hand, they weren't willing to see the other capture any more earthstring energy, which had resulted in the current deadlock.

Eyes flashing with killing intent, Zhao Rou said, "Gongsun Wan'er, both of us have half-filled Dao bottles. This time, only one of us is going to come out alive, and with a full bottle at that!" With that, she launched another attack.

Gongsun Wan'er's face was pale white, and her phoenix was seriously injured. However, she gritted her beautiful teeth and counterattacked. Although their battle seemed ordinary in nature, both of them were unleashing powerful illusion magics against each other.

The slightest misstep by either of them would result in death.

The sky shook and the ground quaked. Even as everyone was driven to new heights of madness by Bai Xiaochun's Earthstring

Foundation Establishment, he was under the lake, shivering in fear. Although he couldn't see what was happening to the lake up above, he was sure that the rumbling flow of earthstring energy had surely created a massive, funnel-like vortex.

“What do I do if people try to interfere...?” Instantly, beads of sweat popped out on his forehead. In his preparations for Foundation Establishment, he had arranged some defensive measures, but now he wasn't sure they would be enough.

Gritting his teeth as the inner whirlpool sucked in massive amounts of earthstring energy, he managed to reach over with his right hand and slap his bag of holding, producing a stack of over a thousand paper talismans, which he sent flying out around him.

He didn't activate them, but all it would take to do so was a thought on his part.

The Divine Crane Shield flew out, ready to be used at a moment's notice. At the same time, he activated the defensive treasure Li Qinghou had given him, which spread out, covering his Undying Silver Skin.

There was little he could do aside from that. Gritting his teeth, he gave an inward shout, causing the whirlpool inside of him to spin even faster. Earthstring energy was sucked relentlessly inward, not merging with the spiritual power inside of him, but tangling together with it. As it flowed through him, the whirlpool grew stronger and stronger, leaving him trembling violently.

The so-called Tideflow consisted of capturing earthstring energy and then combining it with spiritual power to explosive effect. It would temper the flesh and blood, the qi passageways, and the soul. It would temper everything!

For every one part of spiritual power, a hundred parts of earthstring energy were required!

That explosive combination created a liquid which changed the mist of the earthstring energy into a spiritual sea!

That spiritual sea had another name: the Dao foundation!

Every full Tideflow would create one spiritual sea, and one Dao foundation! Nine Tideflows meant nine spiritual seas and nine Dao foundations! Each additional level would be many times larger than the previous level, like an inverted pagoda!

Time passed. Two hours later, and the vortex in the lake above Bai Xiaochun was even larger than before. As heaven and earth shook, Bai Xiaochun let out a powerful roar, causing the vortex to increase in size yet again. Rumbling like thunder echoed out as the whirlpool inside of him reached its capacity. Everything that he had built up over the past two hours was what would shape his first Tideflow.

As soon as the first Tideflow was ready to complete, the whirlpool inside of him began to shrink down in size.

As the earthstring energy and spiritual power which formed the whirlpool flowed through his qi passageways, the whirlpool shrank, and cracking sounds echoed out from within him. The whirlpool was soon nothing more than a black dot which caused his qi passageways, his flesh and blood, and even his soul, to shake violently.

“Tideflow!”

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

His mind filled with rumbling sounds as the combination of earthstring energy and spiritual power spread out. As he roared, his qi passageways grew larger, and his flesh and blood stronger. His bones, his soul, everything about him grew more powerful.

Also in that moment, with the aid of the Tideflow, the earthstring energy and spiritual power finally merged together to form a spiritual liquid that raced through him, entering the misty sea in his dantian region. It was like a drop of water that, upon landing, exploded with heaven-rending, earth-crushing force!

Bai Xiaochun shuddered violently as his dantian region exploded into countless fragments, which then re-formed into a sea!

His Dao foundation had been established, and his spiritual sea had been formed!

At the same time, his qi passageways, and especially his soul,

were violently shaken and ripped away from that which was mortal!

However, the sea was very small, seemingly only about 300 meters wide. Within it could be seen a violet cauldron, covered with countless magical symbols. As it rose up out of the sea, it unleashed a shocking energy which caused Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base to rise rapidly. However, he had not finished his ascension to Foundation Establishment; all of the preparation and hard work he had put into this moment had yet to be drawn upon.

There were two main factors which determined how many Tideflows a person could achieve: first, latent talent, and second, the techniques they had cultivated in the Qi Condensation stage!

Techniques provoked the Tideflow, and latent talent provided the power to actually withstand the force of it. With strong latent talent, one could endure multiple Tideflows. With weaker latent talent, it would be difficult to do the same, even if one had cultivated numerous techniques. In fact, attempting to force too many Tideflows could shatter the Dao foundation and result in death.

At the same time, someone with ordinary techniques and high latent talent would be equally confounded.

As such, it was only the combination of techniques and latent talent that could lead to success. Both were required.

Bai Xiaochun's first spiritual sea contained a cauldron, which



represented the first technique he had cultivated, the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art!

# Chapter 154: Striving For A Great Dao!

---

There were few limitations when it came to the techniques which could be used to create a Tideflow. In all the years which had passed since ancient times, only three rules had come to be identified in that regard. The first rule was that the techniques used for the Tideflow had to be completely mastered down to the tiniest detail. Without that level of success, the Tideflow would be a failure.

It wasn't easy to master a technique to that level; it required a significant expenditure of both physical resources and mental energy.

The second rule was that with every Tideflow, only one technique of any given level of power could be used effectively. Adding in extra techniques would not help successfully achieve the Tideflow.

The third rule was that each successive Tideflow was more difficult, and the requirements for success were thus more stringent.

In most sects, there were few techniques that could propel a disciple past the fifth Tideflow and into the sixth. Such techniques were essentially secret magics, and the foundation of the true power of the sect.

Therefore, the real test was how the sect distributed its techniques, and how deep their resources went. For example, in

the Spirit Stream Sect, the south bank's Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art and the north bank's Heavenspan Elephant Control Art had to be cultivated to the point of mastering Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning or the Heavenspan Elephant Body respectively, otherwise only the first Tideflow would be successful.

Only Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning and the Heavenspan Elephant Body would suffice for the second Tideflow. At the same time, because Violet Cauldron Peak on the south bank and Sunset Peak on the north bank were the home to those two techniques, as long as disciples from there had other powerful techniques to call upon, they could reach the third through fifth Tideflows. However, after that point, it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find ordinary techniques which could help. At that point, only secret magics could be called upon.

As for the disciples from the other mountain peaks, after reaching the eighth level of Qi Condensation and joining the Inner Sect, they would have access to a second, more powerful technique that they could use to prepare for further Tideflows.

Whichever technique the disciple chose to branch out into was extremely important, and was one of the key factors determining how many Tideflows they could achieve.

Generally speaking, the very minimum was two Tideflows, although three was also possible. Depending on the circumstances, four wasn't out of the question.

Even the weakest of disciples were usually able to reach three Tideflows during Earthstring Foundation Establishment. In some

extreme circumstances, some powerful disciples would reach six. However, from ancient times until the present, only nine disciples from the Spirit Stream Sect had ever reached six tideflows by cultivating a second technique. Of course, those nine disciples all went on to be unique and stunning figures during their time.

Unfortunately, after cultivating that second technique, there was nothing else that could be used for further Tideflows. Only secret magics could be used, which was how the ten great secret magics of the Spirit Stream Sect came to be.

The ten secret magics could be used for the fifth Tideflow on. There were even some secret magics, such as Ghosts Haunt the Night and the Waterswamp Kingdom, which on rare occasions could actually form more than one Tideflow.

As a result, Spirit Stream Sect disciples with outstanding latent talent all had the chance to reach eight Tideflows! Even the weakest disciples could get four!

That showed the power and resources of the Spirit Stream Sect! Of course, the other three sects were similar. In the end, the true question was which of the disciples of the various generations would be able to reach the absolute pinnacle.

As for nine Tideflows, that was the legendary peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment. Among all of the Four Great Sects, there had only been one person in the last 10,000 years who had done such a thing.

That person was Master Limitless from the Blood Stream Sect, who succeeded 800 years ago.

The peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment was a realm of incredible power that was incredibly difficult to reach, but not impossible. Although Heavenstring Foundation Establishment surpassed Earthstring Foundation Establishment, it was something that could only be acquired by random chance and luck. No path existed which could be followed to that end.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and his eyes shone with bright light. He had studied up on the Tideflows already, and could sense that the sea of mist had collapsed and formed his first spiritual sea. If he wanted to, he could abandon further Tideflows, and instantly end his Earthstring Foundation Establishment as a success.

He would get his 200 years of longevity, but unfortunately, would be incredibly weak among Earthstring Foundation Establishment cultivators. Bai Xiaochun had no desire whatsoever to be weak. In the cultivation world, the law of the jungle prevailed. Regardless of whether or not he liked it, he knew that it was unavoidable.

He didn't like fighting and killing, but sometimes, there was no other option!

“Because I mastered the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, I can use that for my second Tideflow!” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and suddenly, his spiritual sea began to rotate rapidly. The surrounding earthstring energy instantly began to rumble in his direction once again,

shaking everything around him as a second whirlpool formed inside of him.

The lake up above crashed and seethed as a second vortex appeared up above. It was merely an outline at first, but it was clearly larger than the first vortex, ensuring that numerous disciples looked up to watch.

“The second Tideflow. Presumably, all of the people here should be able to reach at least three or four Tideflows. Each one will be bigger than the one before, and will require even more earthstring energy!”

“Dammit! This guy is reaching Foundation Establishment too quickly. That means there’s going to be less earthstring energy, maybe not even enough for me to reach Foundation Establishment!”

Even as everyone else in the Fallen Sword World grew more and more anxious, another massive rumbling sound echoed out from another direction. There, in the middle of a distant mountain range, another tornado rose up into the sky to connect with the heavens. Another vortex was forming!

As the vortex expanded, the earthstring energy in the world began to rush toward it. Now Bai Xiaochun was sharing the earthstring energy with a second person.

In that distant mountain range was an immortal’s cave, where Fang Lin sat, an expression of extreme focus on his face.

Everyone was shocked by this new development. None of them could ever have imagined that a second person would begin a Tideflow within only two hours or so of the first.

Bloodshot eyes could be seen as everyone began to fight even more fiercely for earthstring energy.

It wasn't that none of them had considered trying to kill the two who were in the middle of Foundation Establishment; at the moment, the others hadn't reached a state of despair, and simply didn't want to waste time on such an effort.

Two hours later, powerful rumbling sounds echoed out from Fang Lin's region as his first Tideflow ended, and the second began. Another two hours after that, the lake above Bai Xiaochun exploded as his second Tideflow ended.

As that happened, a second spiritual sea appeared above the first one, and his energy skyrocketed, making him like a burning fire on a dark night.

He took a deep breath as he realized that he had reached the limits of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art; it would not be enough for a third Tideflow. Closing his eyes, he cast his senses inward, and saw a towering violet cauldron within each of his two spiritual seas. Both of them emanated powerful pressure.

"For my third Tideflow, I'll have to use the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture!" His eyes flickered as the roars of a dragon

and a mammoth could be heard echoing out from the lake to fill the area. His third Tideflow had begun!

A third whirlpool appeared inside of him, which exerted even stronger force than the first two. As that force spread out into the world, massive amounts of earthstring energy were sucked toward him.

Gradually, a third vortex appeared in the sky, within which a swirling dragon could be seen. When the disciples in the other parts of the world looked over, they instantly caught sight of the dragon.

“What technique is that?”

“That’s the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture! The first person to reach Foundation Establishment is from the Spirit Stream Sect!!”

“Heavens! I can’t believe it’s the Spirit Stream Sect. Who is it? Ghostfang maybe? Shangguan Tianyou?”

“Is it Bai Xiaochun?” The disciples from all four of the sects were shocked, but among the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, there was a stir of excitement.

Shangguan Tianyou looked up with bloodshot eyes and let out a maddened roar as he stared at the huge dragon in the vortex connecting to the heavens. “That’s not Ghostfang. It’s Bai



Xiaochun!!”

Gnashing his teeth, he turned to find more enemy disciples to slaughter.

Another two hours passed, and Fang Lin finished his second Tideflow. Another vortex appeared above him, within which was a huge cauldron. It was bronze, and covered with carvings of suns, moons, and stars. It seemed profoundly ancient, as if it were capable of melting all of heaven and earth.

It was none other than the Heaven-Earth Furnace Cauldron!

As soon as the cauldron became visible, everyone knew who it was that had reached Foundation Establishment second.

“It’s Fang Lin from the Pill Stream Sect!!”

It was at that very moment that a third tornado suddenly shot up into the sky to connect to the heavens.

A third person was reaching Foundation Establishment!

Almost immediately, the vortex turned the color of blood. From the look of things, it had to be Song Que!

“Heavens! Song Que from the Blood Stream Sect!!”

“He can kill Foundation Establishment cultivators, and is the first person to provoke a strange sign with his first Tideflow. I heard that Master Limitless did the same thing 800 years ago!”

“Maybe Song Que is going to follow the example of Master Limitless, and reach the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, nine Tideflows!”

Now, three vortexes were vying for the earthstring energy, sending it surging in three different directions. But then... a fourth tornado sprang up in the depths of the Fallen Sword World.

# Chapter 155: Breaking The First Shackle!

---

The fourth tornado sprang up in a plain, where a grand spell formation had been set up. Glittering light spread out in all directions from the formation, in the middle of which sat a lone Qi Condensation disciple.

He was a handsome young man wearing the robes of the Profound Stream Sect. As he performed his breathing exercises, magical symbols flowed back and forth across his body, each one of which seemed to carry incredible destructive power. Occasionally they would converge into something that looked like an iron chain wrapped around him.

The pulsing energy of destruction that seemed to radiate from the young man was none other than a sign of the Exterminating Obliteration Technique!

That young man was none other than the number one Chosen from the Profound Stream Sect, the first person in the past 3,000 years to successfully cultivate the Exterminating Obliteration Technique, Nine-Isles. He was able to unleash a force of obliteration that could exterminate all living things. It could wipe out anything and everything, and could even form obliteration threads; according to the information compiled by the other sects, such threads were as powerful as Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment.

“In that battle with Ghostfang, neither of us came out on top. Just wait until after Foundation Establishment! I’ll fight with you again, and then I’ll completely destroy one of the number one

Chosen in the Spirit Stream Sect!” Killing intent flickered in Nine-Isles’s eyes as he took a deep breath and performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, a whirlpool formed inside of him, exploding with gravitational force as a tornado shot up into the heavens. There, an enormous vortex appeared.

Rumbling sounds filled the air as enormous quantities of earthstring energy flowed toward it.

As of this moment, four enormous vortexes could be seen in four different areas, splitting the Fallen Sword World into four parts.

The rest of the disciples in the Fallen Sword World were getting very anxious. Four people were in the middle of Foundation Establishment, and vast quantities of earthstring energy was being gobbled up. Everyone knew that the earthstring energy was limited, and if they didn’t hurry, their own chances at Foundation Establishment would be dashed, and they would be nothing but minor players compared to those who had succeeded.

The fighting grew more brutal, and almost instantly, casualties mounted.

Even as the disciples fell upon each other with bloodshot eyes, the lake above Bai Xiaochun exploded with a crashing sound as he concluded his third Tideflow.

Up in the heavens, the dragon roared, and inside Bai Xiaochun, a third spiritual sea appeared above his second. This spiritual sea was even larger than the previous one.

“The power of the dragon has ended. Now it’s time for the power of the mammoth!” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. Eyes crimson, he let out a powerful roar as an enormous mammoth appeared around him. It lifted its front feet up, and then slammed them back down into the ground.

BOOM!

A fourth whirlpool appeared inside of him, even larger and more shocking than the third. Up above in the sky, the third vortex had grown still, but now a fourth, even larger vortex could be seen!

Within that vortex was the image of an enormous mammoth, bellowing as the surrounding vortex spun rapidly.

Two hours later, Fang Li followed closely behind with his own fourth Tideflow vortex. As for Song Que and Nine-Isles, they were approaching the conclusion of their own third Tideflows. After two more hours passed, they began their fourth!

Song Que was putting on a particularly stunning performance. An enormous face could be seen in the vortex of his fourth Tideflow, a face with a blood moon on its forehead. Clearly, the speed with which he was absorbing the earthstring energy surpassed everyone else.

“Song Que is already on his fourth Tideflow. I can’t believe how quickly he’s absorbing the earthstring energy. It’s terrifying!”

“Dammit! Is he really going to try to do the same thing as Master Limitless? Is he going to reach the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment with nine Tideflows?”

“This is bad. If someone reaches eight Tideflows, they’ll absorb so much earthstring energy that it will be difficult for anyone else to succeed! I have to get more earthstring energy as quickly as possible!”

Deep anxiety filled all hearts. As of this point, twenty hours had passed since Bai Xiaochun began stepping into Foundation Establishment. It was at this point that, all of a sudden, a fifth tornado shot up into the heavens!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

As it grew larger, it formed a vortex, beneath which was a mass of black mist. Within that mist was none other than Ghostfang.

The sight of five vortexes spinning in the sky caused all necks to crane as the disciples looked up at them. Time passed. It didn’t take long before Ghostfang’s first and second Tideflows were finished. When his third Tideflow vortex appeared, a huge mountain ghost appeared, revealing his identity to all.

“Ghostfang! It’s Ghostfang from the Spirit Stream Sect!”

“He obviously cultivates the Mountain Ghost God-Dazing Magic!”

“Bai Xiaochun. Fang Lin. Song Que. Nine-Isles. Ghostfang!”

As of this moment, five inhuman cultivators had risen up from the crowd of cultivators from the four sects! They were definitely the first wave who would reach Foundation Establishment!

Bai Xiaochun was in the lead. His fourth Tideflow was almost half completed. Next was Fang Lin, who was only about two hours behind Bai Xiaochun. Song Que and Nine-Isles were next, being about four hours behind Bai Xiaochun.

In last place was Ghostfang, who was slower by twenty hours!

Currently, Bai Xiaochun’s fourth whirlpool was spinning rapidly, absorbing massive amounts of earthstring energy. The power of the mammoth was pushing his fleshly body inexorably toward the first of the five shackles of mortality.

With every blast of power, he would shake visibly. He had already cultivated the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture to the point where he could make contact with the first shackle. But now, because of his Undying Live Forever Technique, he was not just at the point of making contact with it, he could break through it!

He was about to break through the first shackle!

“By borrowing the might of the mammoth and the earthstring

energy, I can break through the first shackle during my fourth Tideflow!” Eyes crimson, he let out a shout and once again unleashed a surge of power.

Thunderous crashing resounded in his mind as he battered away at the shackle over and over again. His body hovered on the brink of crumbling, but he hung on. After a few more hours passed, there were only about eight hours left before the fourth Tideflow would end. By now, massive amounts of Tideflow power were exploding out inside of him.

BOOOOMMMM!

Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and cracks appeared all over his skin. His attack on the first shackle was actually proving to be much more difficult than he’d imagined. Even by borrowing the earthstring energy in the form of the Tideflow, he still hadn’t succeeded in breaking through it, not even after thousands upon thousands of attempts.

Using earthstring energy to try to break through the first shackle of mortality was completely unheard of. In fact, nobody other than Bai Xiaochun had ever attempted to do such a thing.

“I can definitely break through!” he thought. Gritting his teeth, he took a deep breath and then drew in more earthstring energy. However, he didn’t use it to blast the shackle, but instead began building it up inside of him.

Eight hours later, and the fourth Tideflow was almost complete.



Bai Xiaochun's eyes were shining with lightning-like brightness.

“Break! Come on, break!” Roaring, he unleashed the Tideflow he had been building up for the past eight hours. Massive rumbling sounds echoed out as it turned into something like an enormous battering ram. His body was like a wall, which the battering ram then slammed into.

Once. Twice. Three times. One blast after another came in quick succession. Soon, cracks spread out in that wall, until at last, the power of the fourth Tideflow, crushed the wall. Cracking sounds filled the air, and at the same time, Bai Xiaochun shook visibly. All of a sudden, he felt something like five enormous mountains resting on his shoulders!

Those five mountains began inside of him, but stretched out high above him. They emitted intense pressure that made him gasp, and it was only at this moment that he could sense them clearly.

All of a sudden, he had the urge to destroy those five mountains, to remove the pressure that was weighing down on him!

“Those five mountains are the five shackles of mortality!” Roaring, he sent heaven-shaking, earth-shattering energy to slam into the first of the five mountains. Under the explosive barrage, the shackle suddenly crumbled!

In that moment, blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth. His qi passageways, his flesh and blood, and every other part of him crumbled, and then instantly reformed.

He was left trembling as an aura began to spread out from him that surpassed anything from the mortal world. It thrived within his flesh and blood, filled his body, and made the entire world suddenly seem completely different.

There seemed to be more colors, more lustre, and at the same time, he felt lighter and more free.

Moments before, he had been shouldering the weight of five enormous mountains, but now, one of them had been destroyed.

He had broken through the first shackle of mortality!

When it happened, his fleshly body power erupted with explosive force. He instantly surpassed the fleshly body limit of Qi Condensation cultivators, and entered Foundation Establishment!

His flesh and blood, his qi passageways, his bones, all of it surpassed what was mortal.

He threw his head back and let loose a long cry which echoed out in all directions. The lake churned, and the fourth vortex up above went still. Moments later... a fifth vortex appeared!

Within that fifth vortex was a crumbling mountain!

This fifth Tideflow was not provoked by the Dragon Mammoth

Sea-Forming Scripture. This mountain had nothing to do with that. It was a natural result of Bai Xiaochun breaking through the first shackle of mortality!

By this point, Fang Lin, Song Que, and Nine-Isles had all reached the end of their own fourth Tideflows. At the same time, Ghostfang completed his third.

Meanwhile, hours upon hours of intense fighting had passed for the other disciples of the four sects. It was then that the second wave of disciples managed to form their earthstring capture crystals.

The first of that second wave was Shangguan Tianyou. Virtually simultaneously, Xu Xiaoshan's vortex also appeared in the sky.

The next was none other than Beihan Lie, the dark horse of the Fallen Sword World!

Last was Zhao Rou from the Pill Stream Sect!

She sat cross-legged in a valley, and standing protectively in front of her was Gongsun Wan'er, whose face was dripping with blood. Shockingly, Gongsun Wan'er didn't have a single scrap of life force upon her!

She was dead, and yet, her corpse could still move. Although she was a bit stiff, toxic mist pulsed out from inside of her, and countless poisonous centipedes squirmed in and out of her eyes,

ears, nose, and mouth. If some powerful expert were to come along, they would be able to tell that Gongsun Wan'er's brain was gone, and inside of her head was a spider with a human face, controlling her corpse!

Gongsun Wan'er had been transformed into a poison puppet!

“Gongsun Wan'er, you are the first poison puppet I've created. Don't worry, soon I'll turn your brother into the second!” Eyes sparkling with vicious enmity, Zhao Rou began to meditate, and the vortex up above her rumbled into motion.

# Chapter 156: Wanna Kill Me?!

---

Nine enormous vortexes swirled in the sky of the Fallen Sword World, slowly eating away at any hope which remained in the hearts of the disciples down below. In any Foundation Establishment Holy Land, earthstring energy was limited, and could only be used by so many cultivators to reach Foundation Establishment.

Furthermore, the number of cultivators who could succeed was not fixed. If someone reached eight Tideflows, they would absorb even more earthstring energy than usual, significantly reducing the overall amount in the world, and would force some people to end their own Tideflows prematurely.

Of course, someone reaching eight Tideflows wasn't the most terrifying scenario.... The worst was if some prodigy came along among the Chosen who managed to reach nine Tideflows. Once someone reached the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, they would most certainly slaughter the people from the other sects who had tried to interfere, and prevent them from succeeding. In fact, even people from that person's own sect who had interfered might also be killed!

Such a thing had only ever occurred once, 800 years before with Master Limitless. A scene of madness had played out at that time, in which the Pill Stream Sect was completely wiped out, and only a few people from the Profound Stream Sect and the Spirit Stream Sect escaped with their lives. Even many people from the Blood Stream Sect were slaughtered by the enraged Master Limitless.

For the disciples from the four sects who hadn't formed their earthstring capture crystals yet, they either had to resign themselves to their fates, or go on a killing rampage, resorting to any tactics possible to succeed. Sometimes that would even mean ambushing fellow disciples.

It was all for the chance to get the earthstring capture crystal and then reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment.

Time passed. The second wave, which consisted of Shangguan Tianyou, Xu Xiaoshan, Beihan Lie and Zhao Rou, had all completed their first three Tideflows. As for Ghostfang, he had already completed his fourth, and was moving on to his fifth.

Song Que and Nine-Isles were already halfway through their fifth.

Bai Xiaochun... was the fastest of them all. He was almost finished with his fifth Tideflow. Earthstring energy was rushing into the vortex, and a fifth spiritual sea was forming inside of him.

Four hours later, a tremor ran through him as the fifth whirlpool inside of him expanded. Tideflow power erupted, and his fifth spirit sea was completed in his dantian region. His fifth Tideflow was over!

"Now for the sixth!" he said, his eyes glimmering with intense focus. Having reached this point in the process, he had no desire to give up. He wanted to know what his limit was. He wanted to know how far he could go. He wanted to know... how many

Tideflows he was capable of!

“The Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art was the basis of my first Tideflow. Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning was the second. As for my third and fourth, that came from the power of the dragon and mammoth!

“The fifth Tideflow should have been from the magic of sea-forming. However, because I broke through the first shackle of mortality, that turned into my fifth Tideflow. Therefore, it’s now time to continue on with sea-forming magic and start my sixth Tideflow!” Taking a deep breath, he again called upon the explosive power of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture. Having already used the power of the dragon and the mammoth, it was now time to use the power of sea-forming!

The so-called sea-forming was actually a method of creating a spiritual sea, of forming a Dao foundation!

Almost immediately, a sixth vortex formed up in the sky, within which was a majestic, roiling sea.

Although the vortex was a spectacular sight, it was somewhat unstable, and didn’t absorb energy very quickly. Bai Xiaochun had the Waterswamp Kingdom, but didn’t want to use that yet. Since he could use the power of sea-forming, he didn’t want to waste his powerful secret magic.

When the other cultivators saw what was happening, they began to sigh with relief.

“Bai Xiaochun’s sixth Tideflow is unstable. From the look of it, he’s already reached his limit, and won’t be able to last much longer. That crumbling mountain in the fifth Tideflow must have been his only secret magic.”

“Six Tideflows is already pretty amazing. More than that would be spectacular!”

It was at this point that Fang Lin and Nine-Isles also breathed sighs of relief. They were completely on guard, and keeping close track of everyone else’s progress.

“Bai Xiaochun’s already reached the end, so there’s no need to worry about him anymore.” That was what both of them were thinking.

Ghostfang frowned. Considering that he knew Bai Xiaochun hadn’t used his secret magic yet, he could tell that something strange was going on. As for Song Que, he looked on, eyes glittering thoughtfully.

Time passed. Bai Xiaochun’s sixth Tideflow slowly sucked in earthstring energy, and although the vortex wasn’t stable, it didn’t collapse.

Gradually, there were a few other disciples who managed to form their earthstring capture crystals and begin their Tideflows. One of them was Hou Yunfei.



It was after the sixty-hour mark passed that Bai Xiaochun's sixth Tideflow finished. Most people present assumed that he was finished....

In the little immortal's cave he'd carved out beneath the lake, his eyes glittered as his sixth spiritual sea formed inside of him. Then, he took a deep breath and suddenly stretched both arms out in front of him.

“Secret magic... Waterswamp Kingdom!”

Water vapor filled the immortal's cave, growing more and more dense until it began to seep out into the lake water itself. The lake began to seethe, and in the blink of an eye, expanded rapidly.

Within a few breaths of time, it grew so rapidly that it became less like a lake and more like a sea.

Up above in the sky, Bai Xiaochun's sixth vortex had stopped moving. However, instead of vanishing, it seemed to be building up energy.

Then... a faint pressure began to weigh down in the Fallen Sword World, to the surprise and shock of everyone. Even Nine-Isles and the other top Chosen were all astonished....

Bai Xiaochun raised his hands up above him, then shoved them back down. Instantly, huge waves roiled out across the surface of

the lake up above, along with intense rumbling sounds. The sixth vortex began to ripple and distort, then spin like mad. Gasps rang out in the Fallen Sword World as... a seventh vortex appeared!

However, that wasn't the end of it! In the same instant that the seventh vortex appeared, the air above it began to twist and turn. Countless clouds seethed as an eighth vortex appeared!

The seventh and eighth vortexes appeared at the same time, accompanied by thunderous rumbling that struck shock into the hearts of all the cultivators present.

“Impossible!! He clearly used a secret magic for his fifth Tideflow!”

“Secret magic! That's a secret magic! Heavens! What he used before wasn't actually a secret magic!?!?”

“I can't believe two vortexes appeared at the same time. Is that... is that the Spirit Stream Sect's spectacular secret magic, the Waterswamp Kingdom? Or is it Ghosts Haunt the Night?!?!”

Soon, the cries of shock turned into bellows of rage.

“Eight Tideflows! He's reached eight Tideflows! If he succeeds, a vast amount of earthstring energy will be sucked away!”

“Stop him!”

The entire sky shook as the seventh and eighth vortexes began to spin rapidly. The power of the Tideflow that erupted out to absorb earthstring energy was vastly stronger than anything before, greater by dozens of times over. It was like the power of an enormous black hole, reaching out into the entire world and tugging at all the earthstring energy in it.

The vortexes belonging to the other disciples began to twist and distort, and even slow down their own absorption.

It was at this point that Fang Lin opened his eyes, then spoke in a voice that rose up into the vortex above him and spread out to fill the entire area. “Pill Stream Sect disciples, heed my command: kill Bai Xiaochun. Stop him from completing his eighth Tideflow!! All who comply will receive special compensation from me upon returning to the sect. I’ll acquire Foundation Establishment Pills for all of you, and take care of you for your whole life!”

At the same time, Nine-Isles sat in his spell formation, his eyes flickering with killing intent. “Profound Stream Sect disciples, heed my command: exterminate Bai Xiaochun. Kill him, and his earthstring energy will disperse back into the world. That will benefit me, you, and everyone!”

Even as Nine-Isles’ words echoed out, Song Que opened his eyes. After a moment of thought, he said, “Blood Stream Sect, heed my command: kill Bai Xiaochun and put an end to his Tideflow!”

Hou Yunfei was starting to get nervous, but being in the middle

of his own Foundation Establishment, could do nothing to help.

Shangguan Tianyou's eyes flickered, and a cold smile appeared on his face. He had been shaken by the fact that Bai Xiaochun started his seventh and eighth Tideflows simultaneously, but now he wasn't so nervous.

"You're simply courting death," he murmured. "You can't blame us for that." With that, he closed his eyes and proceeded with his own Tideflow.

Ghostfang's eyes glittered. Although he felt no ill will toward Bai Xiaochun, at the moment, he couldn't help him even if he wanted to.

Beihan Lie hesitated for a moment. By this point, he wasn't sure how he felt about Bai Xiaochun. He hated him, and even wanted to kill him. But as more time passed, he had reached a point where he didn't want Bai Xiaochun to die at the hands of anyone except himself.

"Despicable wretches!" he shouted. However, he was powerless to offer any assistance at the moment.

As the number one Chosen from the various sects issued their orders, the other disciples in the Fallen Sword World looked on with bloodshot eyes.

"Kill Bai Xiaochun. If he dies, then his earthstring energy will

disperse, and we'll have a chance to succeed!"

"That's right. Song Que, Nine-Isles and even Fang Lin are people we can't risk provoking. But according to the sect's information, Bai Xiaochun isn't the strongest here. We can definitely take him down!"

"I think each sect has different information about Bai Xiaochun.... But now's not the time to worry about that. Kill him, and we'll all have a chance to reach Foundation Establishment!"

"He doesn't qualify to reach eight Tideflows!"

Eyes crimson, disciples sped from all directions toward Bai Xiaochun's lake. The Spirit Stream Sect disciples were starting to get nervous, but considering that all of the disciples from the other three sects were joining forces, they were completely outnumbered.

They were able to stop some of them, but not all. Soon, disciples from all three sects were closing in on Bai Xiaochun.

It was at that point that Bai Xiaochun's eyes snapped open.

"Wanna kill me?!"

# Chapter 157: Fighting Back!

---

Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with piercing light, and yet, inside, his heart was pounding. He had known all along that his attempt at Foundation Establishment couldn't be made without interference. Unless he immediately ended his seventh and eighth Tideflows, people would definitely try to kill him.

“Song Que. Nine-Isles. Fang Lin. You're all despicable!

“I'm not taking away your earthstring energy, yet you send your fellow disciples to try to stop me?!

“Just wait until I'm in Foundation Establishment, then you'll know how awesome I am!” Gritting his teeth, he temporarily suppressed the hatred in his heart. He knew that he was in a moment of deep crisis, and that the slightest carelessness could result in utter catastrophe. The people coming at him weren't just trying to prevent him from proceeding with his Foundation Establishment, they were trying to kill him and steal the earthstring energy that existed in his spiritual seas.

Because of the life-or-death danger, a vicious, maddened look appeared on his face. All of a sudden, he felt like he was back in mountains being chased by the Luo Chen clan.

Rumbling sounds echoed out above the lake as dozens of disciples from the three sects closed in. However, even as they neared his immortal's cave, Bai Xiaochun activated two hundred of the more than one thousand paper talismans he'd set up at the entrance of

the cave.

As they ignited, an enormous shield dozens of meters thick appeared, causing the lake water to churn violently. As for the incoming disciples, they were completely blocked by the glittering shield.

“Each one of those defensive paper talismans is extremely expensive. Bai Xiaochun is down to his last line of defense. Destroy these shields, and we’ll be able to get into his immortal’s cave!”

“Kill Bai Xiaochun, and the earthstring energy inside of him will return to the world around us. We’ll finally get a chance at Foundation Establishment!”

The dozens of disciples that had arrived viciously unleashed numerous powerful attacks onto the shields. One by one, the shields began to distort and then shatter.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. The seventh and eighth vortexes spun rapidly, filling heaven and earth with rumbling sounds, causing massive amounts of earthstring energy to rush toward him.

When about half of the two hundred paper talisman shields had been destroyed, Fang Lin of the Pill Stream Sect completed his Tideflow, despite the pressure which had been weighing down on his vortex. Without hesitating, he began his seventh Tideflow.

Next was Nine-Isles.

After that, Song Que. Soon, all of them were in the middle of their seventh Tideflow.

Ghostfang had begun twenty hours later than Bai Xiaochun, and was now about half finished with his sixth Tideflow.

Even still, it took all of them added together to match the speed with which Bai Xiaochun was absorbing earthstring energy.

The earthstring energy in the Fallen Sword World was rapidly diminishing, causing the disciples of the three sects to grow even more anxious. More and more of them chose to try to kill Bai Xiaochun. After all, the overall earthstring energy that remained was now almost half gone, and the only way to reverse the situation was to kill Bai Xiaochun.

More and more disciples showed up to attack him. By this point, the lake was destroyed, and Bai Xiaochun's defensive shields were almost gone. The nearly one hundred disciples who had gathered in the area were starting to get very excited.

“Come on. One big blast should destroy those shields!”

“Hurry up. Bai Xiaochun's shields are almost gone!”

However, even as hope flickered in their eyes, Bai Xiaochun ignited another four hundred paper talismans.



Instantly, the shields were hundreds of meters thick, a dazzling display that provoked cries of shock among the attacking disciples.

“Dammit! He had more!?!?”

“How many paper talismans does Bai Xiaochun have?!”

“I refuse to believe this! This has definitely got to be his final line of defense!”

Booms echoed out as nearly one hundred disciples attacked with bloodshot eyes and even greater killing intent. As one shield layer after another shattered, Bai Xiaochun pushed the vortexes even harder, madly absorbing as much earthstring energy as he could.

“Faster,” he growled. “Must go faster!” Time passed, and soon the active paper talismans had been whittled down from four hundred to one hundred.

At that point, hissing sounds could be heard as the seventh vortex transformed into a full Tideflow, and a seventh spiritual sea appeared in his dantian region.

Bai Xiaochun could clearly sense how much more powerful he was with that boundless seventh spiritual sea. At the same time, his eighth vortex began to spin even faster.

It was at this point that Fang Lin trembled and finished his seventh Tideflow. However, he was incapable of beginning an eighth and, in fact, anyone who could have examined him closely would have been able to tell that his seventh Tideflow wasn't complete.

Bai Xiaochun was essentially in control of half of the earthstring energy in the world, and Fang Lin simply wasn't as well prepared as everyone else. Lower level Tideflows didn't require as much earthstring energy, but in the seventh, it was quite the opposite, and Fang Lin simply couldn't compete with everyone else. He was totally spent.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Eyes raging with killing intent, he had no choice but to end his Foundation Establishment with a partially completed seventh spiritual sea.

When the vortex above Fang Lin faded away, less of the earthstring energy was being absorbed, and the overall tension in the Fallen Sword World eased up a bit.

Not long after that, Song Que and Nine-Isles completed their seventh Tideflows. Then, it was with great difficulty but no hesitation that they called upon the power of their secret magics to begin their eighth Tideflows.

Rumbling filled the entire world as unstable vortexes appeared above each of them.

It seemed that for both of them, the Eighth Tideflow could fail at

any moment. Apparently, the earthstring energy in the world was barely enough to sustain two such vortexes.

However, both of them struggled to hang on even longer!

“I can definitely reach eight Tideflows!” Nine-Isles howled.

“My goal isn’t eight, it’s nine!” Song Que’s eyes were completely bloodshot as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing his chest to wither up, and yet simultaneously unleashing a bizarre power that poured into the eighth Tideflow vortex, resulting in it accelerating rapidly.

The acceleration of Song Que’s vortex seemed to exert incredible pressure onto Nine-Isles’s vortex. Nine-Isles began to tremble as his vortex slowly withered.

“There’s still hope!” Nine-Isles bit the tip of his tongue and then spit out a mouthful of blood, which transformed into a magical symbol that settled down onto him. As it did, the chain of magical symbols that surrounded him began to emit dazzling light, causing the whirlpool inside of him to speed up. Soon, he was catching up to Song Que.

However, it was at this point that Ghostfang completed his seventh Tideflow and began his eighth. Instantly, Nine-Isles, who had already been teetering unstably, let loose a cry of despair.

Moments later, Nine-Isles’ vortex shuddered, and then ground to

a halt.

“No!!” Nine-Isles howled, his eyes shining with madness. However, there was nothing he could do. His eighth Tideflow was a failure.

Now that both he and Fang Lin had ceased to absorb earthstring energy, the pressure in the Fallen Sword World had eased significantly. With two less Tideflow vortexes in the picture, Song Que’s eighth Tideflow stabilized even further.

As for Ghostfang, he also had a better chance than before, and was catching up relentlessly. Although he was also teetering on the verge of failure, he was still hanging on, and the question was how long he could continue to do so.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun also benefited, and began to advance even more rapidly.

It was a dazzling scene as three people proceeded through their eighth Tideflow: Bai Xiaochun, Song Que, and Ghostfang!

Two people had failed so far: Fang Lin and Nine-Isles!

As for Shangguan Tianyou, Beihan Lie, Zhao Rou and Xu Xiaoshan, they were in the second wave. Because so much earthstring energy had been absorbed by the disciples in the first wave, their speed was significantly slower. All of them had just begun their fourth Tideflows.

Hou Yunfei and some of the other miscellaneous Chosen were in the third wave, and had just begun their second Tideflows. As far as Hou Yunfei was concerned, considering his latent talent and expectations, even reaching one Tideflow in Earthstring Foundation Establishment was a significant accomplishment.

By this point, the rest of the disciples had no hope whatsoever of finishing their earthstring capture crystals, and therefore, no chance to even achieve a single Tideflow.

In their despair, such disciples' killing intent soared, and their eyes came focus on the three vortexes up above that represented the disciples in their eighth Tideflows.

“Ghostfang just started his eighth Tideflow, and isn't completely stabilized. He has a lot of earthstring energy, but not as much as Song Que and Bai Xiaochun!”

“Song Que is super famous, and has a shocking murderous aura. Plus, it's never a good idea to provoke people from the Blood Stream Sect. Furthermore, he probably doesn't have as much earthstring energy as Bai Xiaochun....”

“Bai Xiaochun is already being besieged by quite a few people. We should take advantage of the moment to kill him. If he dies, his earthstring energy will disperse back into the world!” After analyzing the situation, most of the disciples chose to target Bai Xiaochun.

In that same moment, Fang Lin finalized his Foundation Establishment and solidified his spiritual seas. Rumbling sounds echoed out as he flew up into the air, emanating the crushing pressure of Foundation Establishment.

His hair whipped about as a mighty wind swirled around him. At the same time, the image of the Heaven-Earth Furnace Cauldron appeared behind him. Clearly, he was far superior to any Qi Condensation cultivator.

He was the first person to reach Foundation Establishment, and was now the most powerful person in the Fallen Sword World!

“Since I got seven Tideflows, the rest of you better not even dream of finishing your eighth!” Eyes flickering with killing intent, he looked around at Song Que, Ghostfang, and Bai Xiaochun. Then, he shot toward Bai Xiaochun like a bolt of lightning.

“I’ll kill you first, and absorb your earthstring energy. Maybe I can still reach eight Tideflows after all!!”

When using Tideflow power to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment, it was possible for someone to interrupt any of their first eight Tideflows and prematurely reach Foundation Establishment. Furthermore, because the Dao foundation wasn’t complete in such a situation, it was possible to continue after the interruption, as long as too much time didn’t go by. However, because of the huge amount of earthstring energy required, it was usually too difficult to do such a thing.

In contrast, once a ninth Tideflow began, one had to choose to either complete it, or die trying.

# Chapter 158: Spirit Stream Sect, Defend Bai Xiaochun!

---

Almost in the same moment that Fang Lin headed toward Bai Xiaochun, rumbling sounds could be heard as Nine-Isles rose up into the air like a bedeviled god.

His hair whipped about him as the magical symbols which were wrapped around him loosened, creating a band of magical symbols 30 meters wide. They were black, and pulsed with the power of the Exterminating Obliteration Technique, causing a will of extermination to fill the entire area.

From the energy radiating off of him, he seemed even more powerful than Fang Lin!

“Since Fang Lin is taking out Bai Xiaochun, I’m going to kill Ghostfang. Ghostfang, if it weren’t for the delay caused by your interference, I wouldn’t have been the fourth in line to begin Foundation Establishment. Because I started so late, I wasn’t able to complete my eighth Tideflow. But I still have a chance if I kill you and absorb your earthstring energy!” Nine-Isles threw his head back and roared, radiating hatred. He hated Bai Xiaochun, but he hated Ghostfang even more. In the end, he attributed his failure to the sudden rise of Ghostfang.

Of course, he hated Song Que just as much, and planned to get revenge on him as well. However, his plan was to first take out Ghostfang.



Radiating the might of Foundation Establishment, he blurred into motion as he shot through the air toward Ghostfang.

With an inward sigh of relief, Song Que focused fully on his eighth vortex. “Nine-Isles and Fang Lin don’t qualify to tangle with me. Only Bai Xiaochun and Ghostfang do.... However, if they get interrupted, that will be my greatest chance to succeed!”

There was nothing left of the lake above Bai Xiaochun; there was only a huge crater, at the bottom of which was the immortal’s cave he had created. There, glittering shields were being constantly bombarded by disciples from the three sects. At the moment, there were only a hundred shield layers left, which was when Fang Lin appeared like a bolt of lightning.

He was a blur of motion that sped toward the shields and then waved his hand, causing the Heaven-Earth Furnace Cauldron to rapidly grow larger and then smash downward.

“Break!” he shouted in a deafening roar that caused the other disciples to back up in astonishment. Many of them even coughed up mouthfuls of blood due to Fang Lin’s Foundation Establishment might.

The stunning power of the Heaven-Earth Furnace Cauldron was such that all hundred shields shattered from a single blow.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Fang Lin’s eyes flickered with killing intent as he prepared to enter the immortal’s cave. However, it was at that moment that Bai Xiaochun looked up, his eyes completely

bloodshot.

“Fang Lin!” he growled, and then his final 600 paper talismans all ignited.

Popping sounds filled the air as 600 shields appeared to block Fang Lin’s path.

“Dammit, I can’t believe he still has paper talismans left!!” Fang Lin frowned. He had just stepped into Foundation Establishment, and had not yet fully acclimated, and was thus unable to unleash the full potential of his battle prowess.

The other disciples from the three sects all stared with wide eyes at what they were seeing. Gasps could be heard as they were shaken by the incredible display of wealth put on by Bai Xiaochun. They all knew how expensive paper talismans were, and a quick calculation revealed that he had just used over a thousand of them. Instantly, exclamations of shock could be heard.

“How... how many paper talismans does he actually have?”

“Dammit! Most people use spell formations or magical techniques to defend themselves during Foundation Establishment. I can’t believe he’s relying entirely on paper talismans!”

“Even if he has more of them, it won’t do him any good. He might as well forget about succeeding with his eighth Tideflow!”

Fang Lin's eyes flickered as he let loose another attack.

The booming sounds caused Bai Xiaochun to grow even more nervous, but at the same time, furious.

Without Fang Lin, the situation wouldn't have been so nerve-wracking. But considering the power of Foundation Establishment was now in the mix, Bai Xiaochun knew that his defenses couldn't hold out for very long.

"He just entered Foundation Establishment, and probably isn't completely used to it yet. I still have a chance!" Gritting his teeth, he ignored the booming sounds and focused fully on rotating the whirlpool inside of him.

As it spun faster and faster, the shields were broken away layer by layer. Fang Lin and the other disciples continued to unleash attacks, and time ticked away. Soon, half of the shields were gone, and yet Fang Lin was starting to get very nervous.

"Not good!"

It was at that very moment that Bai Xiaochun's eighth vortex suddenly stopped moving.

His eighth Tideflow... was a success!

An eighth spiritual sea appeared within him, just above the seventh. At the same time, it seemed like a ninth vortex was about

to appear up above in the sky.

“My ninth Tideflow will be... my Undying Live Forever Technique!” Bai Xiaochun’s expression was one of madness as he put everything on the line. As he called upon the Undying Live Forever Technique, silver light spread out, within which faint traces of gold were already visible.

As he did... a ninth vortex appeared overhead!

His eyes were clamped shut, as though he didn’t even have the power to open them. He almost seemed like he was on the verge of exploding.

As for everyone else in the Fallen Sword World, it didn’t matter what they were doing, their hearts trembled, and their jaws dropped.

“A ninth... Tideflow....”

“I can’t believe... that nine Tideflows have appeared!”

“The last time this happened was 800 years ago. Heavens....”

Outside Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave, Fang Lin’s eyes went wide, and he shivered. He couldn’t even complete seven Tideflows, and yet here someone was working on their ninth.

In the middle of unleashing an attack on Ghostfang's location, Nine-Isles trembled and turned to look in Bai Xiaochun's direction. Panting, he said, "The Spirit Stream Sect... has started a ninth Tideflow. We can't let that ninth Tideflow succeed!" Abandoning his enmity with Ghostfang, he began to speed toward Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, Song Que was panting, his eyes gleaming with the desire to do battle. Because Bai Xiaochun had begun his ninth Tideflow, Song Que's eighth Tideflow now seemed to be on the verge of falling apart. Expression one of utter determination, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then slapped his hands down onto the ground, causing a boom to echo out. Moments later, cracking sounds could be heard from nine locations within the Fallen Sword World, as earthstring energy was apparently forcibly extracted using some special technique. Moments later, Song Que's eighth Tideflow stabilized.

Ghostfang observed silently as Nine-Isles sped off into the distance. His expression was one of disappointment. He didn't want to admit it, but he could sense that his eighth Tideflow was rapidly destabilizing. Because of the appearance of a ninth Tideflow, it would soon shatter.

Shangguan Tianyou was in the middle of his fifth Tideflow, and as soon as he sensed that Bai Xiaochun had started a ninth Tideflow, all of his confidence and pride was shattered.

"Never educated by his parents, and always pulling off freakish stunts. The shameless son of a bitch! I can't believe he got to nine Tideflows! What a massive joke!" All of a sudden, Shangguan

Tianyou let loose a stream of shrill laughter.

Beihan Lie bitterly clenched his fists. Despite the endless frustrations caused by Bai Xiaochun, he had never given up hope that he could surpass him. As of this moment, he gritted his teeth, and felt more strongly than ever that he had to do just that.

Everyone in the Fallen Sword World experienced a short moment of reflective silence. But then, the voices of Fang Lin and Nine-Isles echoed out in all directions.

“Our three sects will never tolerate the appearance of nine Tideflows! You people know what we have to do!”

“Kill Bai Xiaochun! Stop the ninth Tideflow, and return the earthstring energy to the world around us. Profound Stream Sect! Blood Stream Sect! Pill Stream Sect! If we don’t attack him together now, when will we?!?!”

A moment later, Song Que’s voice rang out, grim and sinister. “Kill Bai Xiaochun!”

The truth was that the three of them didn’t even need to say anything. All of the non-Foundation Establishment cultivators in the Fallen Sword Abyss were terrified, and began to speed toward Bai Xiaochun, killing intent raging.

Hou Yunfei had completed his third Tideflow, and was in the middle of his fourth. Suddenly, he smiled happily and said,

“Xiaochun, you defended me from the Luochen Clan, and now, I’m going to defend you!”

His fourth Tideflow began to fade as he chose to enter Foundation Establishment at that very moment.

He knew that Bai Xiaochun would be in a very weak state, and was about to be attacked by a whole horde of enemies. Therefore, he would... defend Bai Xiaochun!

Even as his Tideflow ended, he cried out, “Spirit Stream Sect disciples, it’s me, Hou Yunfei. I just finished my own Foundation Establishment, and I’m going to defend Bai Xiaochun. Who’s with me?!”

After a moment of silence, the voices of numerous Spirit Stream Sect disciples could be heard shouting in response.

“Sect Uncle Bai had our backs when we entered this place. I’m going to stand as his Dharma protector!”

“Bai Xiaochun might be naughty and mischievous, but he’s one of us!”

“Nine Tideflows! That’s a sign that the Spirit Stream Sect is going to rise to prominence! You people want to kill Sect Uncle Bai? I don’t think so!” Virtually all of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples gritted their teeth and began to speed in Bai Xiaochun’s direction.

Ghostfang couldn't hold on any longer. As his eighth Tideflow faded away in failure, he thought for a moment, and then completely ignored Bai Xiaochun in favor of... going to interfere with Song Que. Apparently, he viewed Bai Xiaochun's success or failure as having nothing to do with himself.

Bei Han Lie let out a powerful roar. Suppressing the rage he felt toward Bai Xiaochun, he ended his fifth Tideflow and chose to enter Foundation Establishment immediately. Then, he stepped out to act as Dharma Protector for Bai Xiaochun.

“This isn't for you, Bai Xiaochun, it's for the Spirit Stream Sect!”

There were a few other Spirit Stream Sect disciples who similarly gritted their teeth and then ended their Tideflows to join their fellows.

Soon, in the entire Spirit Stream Sect, the only person other than Bai Xiaochun who was still continuing with a Tideflow... was Shang Guan Tianyou!

Eyes bloodshot, he was completely ignoring everything else other than his own wavering fifth Tideflow.

Fierce fighting instantly broke out as the disciples charged in the direction of Bai Xiaochun. Soon, the area outside of Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave was the scene of a bitter battle as only a few dozen Spirit Stream Sect stood against a crowd of over a hundred.



Time passed, and the fighting only grew more intense. Under the combined attacks of Fang Lin and Nine-Isles, Hou Yunfei was already seriously injured, as was Beihan Lie. The Spirit Stream Sect disciples were shoved back over and over again, and Bai Xiaochun's shields continued to be whittled away.

Bai Xiaochun could sense what was happening outside, and he was left trembling. He wanted to end the Tideflow, but quickly realized that he had no control over it. It was impossible to end it himself, and in fact, he wasn't even capable of opening his eyes.

After all, the ninth Tideflow represented the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment!

Unless the process were somehow interfered with, there were only three ways it could be ended. One was to succeed, which would naturally end the Tideflow. The second way it might end was if the Fallen Sword World ran out of earthstring energy, causing the Tideflow to fade away. The final method was if the person undergoing their ninth Tideflow was killed.

Although his eyes were closed, they were completely bloodshot. He could sense that his fellow disciples were fighting for him, and he could tell that they were bleeding and injured, maybe even dying. His mind felt like it was being torn apart; he wanted to open his eyes, to end the Tideflow. But he couldn't.

"This ninth Tideflow either needs to fail, or hurry up and finish... ARGHHHHH!!" Trembling physically, he let out a

protracted inner howl.

# Chapter 159: Undying Gold Skin!

---

To everyone else, this was a rare occasion to see the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, something that, in the past several thousand years, had only occurred once, 800 years ago with Master Limitless of the Blood Stream Sect.

However, to Bai Xiaochun, it was more than that. It was also a chance to make incredible progress with his Undying Live Forever Technique.

It was an opportunity to advance from Undying Silver Skin to Undying Gold Skin!

With the life-saving magical item given to him by Li Qinghou, his entire body was covered by a layer of blackness, and yet not even that could prevent a faint gold light from glittering around him.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun had successfully cultivated the full first level of the Undying Codex!

He had successfully broken through the first shackle of mortality, something no one else had been able to accomplish for countless years. Of course, a few people had accomplished that task in the past. After all, the point of the first volume of the Undying Codex was to break through that first shackle.

But Bai Xiaochun was the first person to ever make additional progress even after breaking through the shackle!

Generally speaking, there wasn't much in between the different layers that were the five shackles of mortality. They were like circles with a fixed size and shape. However, with Bai Xiaochun, that fixed circle appeared to be expanding rapidly!

It was completely and utterly shocking!

Rumbling sounds filled his body as the golden color of his skin grew more and more intense. The Undying Live Forever Technique was in full operation, and because he had broken through the first shackle, the ninth vortex up above began to spin even more quickly, causing his ninth Tideflow to absorb earthstring energy at a shocking rate.

It was a harmonious cycle. The more earthstring energy that came to form his ninth spiritual sea, the more golden light shone from his Undying Skin. That in turn caused the ninth Tideflow to speed up even more.

It was a seemingly unending cycle that only continued to accelerate as the moments passed.

At the same time, Song Que was calling upon everything he had at his disposal, including secret magics of the Blood Stream Sect and the energy nodes he had connected to earlier, to also absorb earthstring energy at a shocking rate.

For most people, the time it took to complete a Tideflow was set, but Bai Xiaochun and Song Que were completely breaking that

trend. Both of them were sucking in as much earthstring energy as other people might take a month to absorb.

As for Song Que, massive rumbling sounds filled the area surrounding him as Ghostfang did everything he could to interfere. And yet, Song Que still managed to succeed with his eighth Tideflow!

As the power of the eighth Tideflow surged through him, Song Que's eyes shone with madness and excitement.

“Ninth Tideflow!” he howled. Outside, Ghostfang's face flickered as he saw a ninth vortex spring into being in the sky above.

According to an old saying, there can never be two suns in the sky at the same time. However, as of this moment, the two vortexes which could be seen in the Fallen Sword World were both that of the ninth Tideflow, and everyone who could see them was shocked to the core.

Even Shangguan Tianyou felt completely shaken. As for the disciples who were still trying to hang on to their own Tideflows, their faces went ashen with despair. They could only watch helplessly as their Tideflows faded away into nothing.

There was simply no way to compete with the two king-like disciples who were in the middle of their ninth Tideflows. No one could absorb any earthstring energy with those vortexes in existence.

“I refuse to accept this!” Shangguan Tianyou said through gritted teeth. However, his fifth Tideflow was halted, and he had no other choice but to enter Foundation Establishment. Killing intent surging in his eyes, he exploded into motion, not in Bai Xiaochun’s direction, but to join Ghostfang in resisting Song Que.

Inwardly, he howled, “Bai Xiaochun, I hope you die, and I hope you do too, Song Que!”

Zhao Rou also had no choice but to give up in the middle of her fifth Tideflow, and it was the same with Xu Xiaoshan.

As for everyone else, they were in their second or third Tideflows.

As of this moment, the only people still in the middle of reaching Earthstring Foundation Establishment in the Fallen Sword World were Bai Xiaochun and Song Que!

The other disciples who had been interrupted wrathfully chose to either attack Bai Xiaochun or Song Que. Considering that Bai Xiaochun had been the biggest hindrance to everyone, it was no surprise that most people chose to attack him. As such, the disciples who were defending Bai Xiaochun were already in imminent danger.

Just as Zhao Rou was about to go attack Bai Xiaochun, she noticed that, somehow, the poison puppet she had created to defend herself, Gongsun Wan’er, was nowhere to be found.

There wasn't a single trace left behind to indicate where she might have gone. Zhao Rou's heart trembled, but there was no time to ponder the matter carefully. Without any further hesitation, she shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were closed, but they were more bloodshot than ever.

"Must go faster!" he murmured. Anxiety filled him; he didn't have any desire for the fellow disciples outside his immortal's cave to die trying to defend him.

It was at this moment that the entire immortal's cave suddenly trembled violently as the final paper talisman shields outside were destroyed.

Bai Xiaochun had used so many paper talismans that his defenses far exceeded those of the spell formations used by the other Chosen. But now, they had been completely destroyed.

As soon as that happened, the disciples of the other three sects unleashed all of their divine abilities in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Thankfully, Fang Lin and Nine-Isles were being held off by Hou Yunfei, Beihan Lie, and two other Spirit Stream Sect disciples who had reached Earthstring Foundation Establishment, making it temporarily impossible for them to join in. Therefore, most of the people attacking Bai Xiaochun were Qi Condensation disciples.

Numerous cultivators unleashed magical techniques, all of which were blocked by Bai Xiaochun's Divine Crane Shield.

In the Qi Condensation stage, neither Hou Yunfei nor Beihan Lie had been on the same level as Fang Lin and Nine-Isles. Now that they were in Foundation Establishment, it was no different. Despite having the advantage of numbers, they were still in extreme danger, and were being injured repeatedly. Blood sprayed out of Hou Yunfei's mouth, and yet he continued to block the way, seemingly maddened.

Beihan Lie hesitated for a moment. He was soaked with blood and covered with wounds, and as such, began to back up. He had come to help Bai Xiaochun, but wouldn't give his life for him. Seeing that the immortal's cave was on the verge of being destroyed, he decided that now was the time to retreat.

Fang Lin didn't chase him. Instead, he shot toward Bai Xiaochun, joining the Qi Condensation disciples to try and destroy the Divine Crane Shield.

"Are you looking to die?!" Nine-Isles barked, eyes flickering with killing intent. Considering he had just stepped into Foundation Establishment, he didn't dare to unleash too much of his cultivation base, for fear that his Dao foundation was not stable. However, Hou Yunfei didn't seem to care at all about his Dao foundation, and was fighting like a madman, making it very difficult to keep him under control.

Roaring in fury, Nine-Isles launched an attack with the power of obliteration, which instantly slammed into Hou Yunfei, who didn't



even have a chance to dodge.

Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he was sent tumbling backward, bones snapping left and right inside of him. After he landed hard on the ground, he struggled to rise to his feet, but couldn't. All he could do was lay there helplessly as over a hundred cultivators unleashed countless attacks onto Bai Xiaochun.

“Xiaochun,” he murmured, “this is my fault for being so useless.”

The other Spirit Stream Sect disciples were all seriously injured. Thankfully, the disciples from the other three sects were focused on killing Bai Xiaochun, and weren't trying to kill them.

Of course, each and every enemy disciple wanted to be the one to land the killing blow. After all, whoever was closest to Bai Xiaochun when he died would benefit the most from the resulting blast of earthstring energy that would spread out.

By now, none of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples had any energy left to fight, and could only bitterly watch Bai Xiaochun being bombarded.

Massive booms echoed out constantly. Fang Lin and Nine-Isles were already top Chosen, and were now seven Tideflows Earthstring Foundation Establishment cultivators. Under their leadership, the bombardment of all the Qi Condensation disciples caused cracks to spread out all over Bai Xiaochun's Divine Crane Shield.

“Time to die, Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Return your earthstring energy to the world around you,” Fang Lin said. “Maybe I can’t continue with my Tideflow, but at least some of my fellow Pill Stream Sect disciples will reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment!”

“Bai Xiaochun, there’s no way we’ll let you succeed!” As the crowd roared, the Divine Crane Shield finally exploded.

The magical item which Bai Xiaochun’s Elder Brother Sect Leader had given him shattered. As it did, the soul of the divine crane flew out and settled down around Bai Xiaochun, providing one last measure of defense.

However, it only took moments for it to begin to fade away. In that instant, the entire group of disciples from the other three sects stormed in. It was also at that point that the final wave of disciples who had reached Foundation Establishment joined the crowd. The most powerful among them had reached five Tideflows, and the weakest, one. However, they were still Earthstring Foundation Establishment cultivators, and their attacks caused the divine crane to let out a piercing cry as it disappeared.

Zhao Rou from the Pill Stream Sect attacked with particular viciousness, and as soon as the crane vanished, she reached out to touch Bai Xiaochun’s forehead.

“It doesn’t matter that you’re an eight Tideflows Foundation

Establishment expert, you won't be able to escape death this time. All Spirit Stream Sect disciples must die!" Zhao Rou's beauty was twisted by venomous rage as her finger made contact with Bai Xiaochun's forehead.

Just as she was expecting his head to explode, a powerful force slammed back into her, shoving her backward several meters. At the same time, the attacks from the other disciples also rebounded.

Booms rang out, but a black glow emanated from Bai Xiaochun, defending against everything.

"Dammit! He still has more defenses!?"

"This Bai Xiaochun has profound defensive preparations. He must have known that reaching nine Tideflows would provoke widespread rage. That was why he prepared so well ahead of time!"

"It doesn't matter how many defensive layers he has. However much earthstring energy he's absorbed, that's how much he's going to spit back out!"

The glow of magical techniques rose high into the air as seven or eight Foundation Establishment cultivators and more than a hundred Qi Condensation disciples unleashed attacks. The life-saving magical item from Li Qinghou began to distort, and after a few moments, a popping sound could be heard as it reverted into a bracelet, which was now covered with cracks. If it weren't for the fact that the new Foundation Establishment cultivators didn't dare to fully call upon all their power, it would have already been

destroyed.

When the black glow vanished, Bai Xiaochun was revealed, shining with boundless golden light!!

“Die!” Zhao Rou said excitedly. She once again reached out with her index finger, and yet, before she could get close, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes snapped open.

They looked like the eyes of a wild beast, filled with boundless madness and infinitely burning rage. The entire world seemed to suddenly freeze in place!

# Chapter 160: Slaughtering Chosen!

---

When Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, he saw Nine-Isles' vicious expression, Fang Lin's cruel smile, and other Foundation Establishment cultivators, including Zhao Rou, whose beautiful face was twisted with venomous rage as she reached out toward his forehead.

Everything around him was moving incredibly slowly, as if time had suddenly been locked in place.

He could sense that his ninth Tideflow had ended, and that a ninth spiritual sea existed in his dantian region.

He now had a total of nine spiritual seas, each one larger and more magnificent than the one beneath it. Boundless spiritual power surged inside of him, pouring through his body. As his spiritual seas grew more and more stable, his Dao foundation was formed!

He also realized something that none of the other disciples would be aware of; the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, nine Tideflows, didn't require a long period of stabilization like the other levels did.

It stabilized almost instantly, filling him with a sensation of unprecedented power. He had never experienced this level of spiritual power, this much vital energy. He could clearly sense the terrifying life force that radiated out from him, as well as the signs that his longevity was increasing.

In addition to all that, his Undying Skin had already broken through to the next level. Instead of Undying Silver Skin, he now had Undying Gold Skin!

He had advanced by leaps and bounds, had become more powerful in all aspects. He had reached a new level of life that was completely different from before. As of this moment, he was no longer a part of the mortal world, but was a true cultivator who had shed his mortality!

However, the price he had to pay was immense, and he was well aware of that. He understood that only the fit survived, and he understood the law of the jungle. He knew that on the path to living forever, it didn't matter if he hated fighting and killing. The path was narrow and cramped, and although he was willing to walk it along with others, there were many who didn't share such sentiments.

He knew now more than ever that sometimes, even if he didn't feel like killing someone, that person might want to kill him. In that case, he could either close his eyes and die, or unleash his rage and fight!

He saw the shattered battleground that was the area outside his immortal's cave. He saw the injured Spirit Stream Sect disciples, and he saw the bloodied and unconscious Hou Yunfei.

He was so moved that tears welled up in his eyes. These were his own fellow disciples, like his family. Each and every Spirit Stream

Sect disciple was a person he would never be able to forget.

He saw some of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples who were now nothing more than corpses, and it filled his heart with pain. Their end came much like Zhou Youdao's, and that idea filled Bai Xiaochun with so much rage that his eyes turned red.

How his fury burned!

He was furious that he had been besieged, and furious that Spirit Stream Sect disciples had died defending him. He was furious that, despite not having provoked any of these other sects, they had come to take his life!

"I practice cultivation because I want to live forever. I don't like fighting and killing. But... I can if I have to!" To Bai Xiaochun, the world had turned as crimson as blood. Everything had slowed down to the point where it wasn't moving.

"My fellow Spirit Stream Sect disciples died protecting me. So now, I'll make sure the survivors reach Foundation Establishment!"

"Each and every Spirit Stream Sect disciple here is going to get to Earthstring Foundation Establishment!"

Rage burning in his heart, he spoke the words like an oath, and then, everything seemed to return to normal. Zhao Rou looked just as ferocious as she had moments ago. As her index finger closed in on his forehead, it suddenly lurched to a stop. At some unknown

point, Bai Xiaochun had raised his own right hand, and before Zhao Rou even realized what had happened, he clamped his hand down onto her wrist.

“No!!” she screamed. She was about to attempt to sever her own arm to get away, but Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered with killing intent, and he squeezed his hand down. A popping sound could be heard, along with a bitter scream as Zhao Rou’s entire arm exploded. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet and took a step forward, slamming bodily into her. Her chest caved in and blood sprayed out of her mouth, along with a choked shriek. Even as she attempted to turn and flee, her entire body exploded.

At the same time, her Dao foundation was destroyed. She had just stepped into Foundation Establishment, and the earthstring energy inside of her hadn’t completely solidified. As she died, massive quantities of earthstring energy erupted out in all directions. Bai Xiaochun quickly waved his sleeve, sending it in the direction of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples.

Everything happened in the briefest of moments. Bai Xiaochun’s hair flew around him as he took another step forward, appearing in front of a disciple from the Profound Stream Sect who had experienced two Tideflows. Before the disciple even realized what was happening, Bai Xiaochun grabbed his neck and squeezed his hand down.

CRACK!

Bai Xiaochun threw the body toward the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, and as it exploded, large quantities of earthstring energy



surged out.

He took another step forward, ending up in front of a disciple from the Blood Stream Sect who had experienced three Tideflows. A single fist strike, and the disciple exploded.

One more step put him in front of a disciple from the Pill Stream Sect with a single Tideflow cultivation base. Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, and the aura of the Waterswamp Kingdom appeared. It was merely the aura, nothing more, and yet the Pill Stream Sect disciple's eyes went bloodshot, and exploded into bits!

Just like before, earthstring energy flowed out toward the Spirit Stream Sect disciples.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun stopped in place. Only a brief moment had elapsed since he had stepped forward to kill Zhao Rou.

As he stood there, surrounded by rumbling sounds, the crowds of attacking disciples from the other sects were shocked to find that the person who had been sitting cross-legged in meditation had vanished, and now stood right in front of them.

Zhao Rou had been killed, and Foundation Establishment cultivators from the Pill Stream Sect, Profound Stream Sect, and Blood Stream Sect had all been cut down. At the same time, a huge amount of earthstring energy was swirling toward the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, who were just as shocked as everyone else.

Voice booming like thunder, Bai Xiaochun roared, “Friends from the Spirit Stream Sect, the time has come to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment, and I will be your Dharma protector!” Trembling, the Spirit Stream Sect disciples quickly sat down cross-legged and began to absorb the earthstring energy.

Because this earthstring energy came directly from slaughtered Foundation Establishment cultivators, there was no need for an earthstring capture crystal to be able to absorb it!

Everything happened so quickly that the minds of the onlookers were left reeling, and their scalps went numb. Gasps could be heard as all of them were filled with intense sensations of deadly crisis.

Nine-Isles’ eyes were wide with disbelief. Fang Lin was shaking visibly, and felt as if every drop of blood inside of him were screaming at him that Bai Xiaochun was more terrifying than he could possibly imagine.

“Impossible!”

Even as everyone reeled in shock, killing intent flickered in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, and he took another step forward, placing him in front of Nine-Isles.

A single punch caused blood to spray out of Nine-Isles’s mouth. Screaming, he called upon all of the power of the Exterminating Obliteration Technique to defend himself. Then, face ashen, he fled without the slightest hesitation.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered. He had sensed a strange power in Nine-Isles just now, something that protected his life force. Even though it wasn't a full match for Bai Xiaochun, it was still powerful!

Bai Xiaochun let Nine-Isles flee, and flickered into motion, appearing in front of Fang Lin. Instantly, two fingers shot out toward Fang Lin's throat.

It didn't matter how Fang Lin tried to defend himself. It didn't matter what magical techniques or magical items he called up. Everything was crushed by Bai Xiaochun's fingers. They destroyed everything like a hammer crushing an ice cube, speeding forward to latch onto Fang Lin's throat.

Throat Crushing Grasp!

A cracking sound rang out, and Fang Lin's eyes went wide. Blood oozed out of his mouth as his seven-layered Dao foundation collapsed. He wasn't even able to scream. Bai Xiaochun tossed his body off to the side, releasing earthstring energy ten times stronger than anything before. The Spirit Stream Sect disciples trembled as they madly absorbed it.

"I never thought you'd be so much weaker than Nine-Isles," Bai Xiaochun said, eyes flashing.

It was at that very moment that a black soul fire flew out from Fang Lin's body, but before it could get very far, Bai Xiaochun took

a step forward and grabbed it.

A face was visible inside of the soul fire, but it wasn't Fang Lin's. It was a sinister face which was half covered by a black birthmark. It stared at Bai Xiaochun, and then began to chuckle.

“Being able to find someone interesting like you among all these people makes dying worth it. Maybe we'll have a chance to meet again someday!”

With that, the soul fire faded away. Although no one else was able to observe what had happened, Bai Xiaochun could hear the voice clearly in his head.

“Parlor tricks!” Bai Xiaochun said, snorting coldly.

It was only at around this time that the other disciples in the area began to react. Miserable screams rang out as the terrified disciples attempted to flee in all directions.

As far as they were concerned, Bai Xiaochun had turned into a devil!

“Zhao Rou's dead! Fang Lin's dead! Nine-Isles has fled!”

“Heavens! Is this the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment?!”

“800 years ago, Master Limitless of the Blood Stream Sect reached the peak, and almost all of the disciples from the other three sects were wiped out.”

Screaming, the more than one hundred disciples in the area began to flee as if they had gone mad. Their minds were trembling, and they were completely and utterly shaken by the terror that was Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, the Spirit Stream Sect disciples were shivering in excitement. Beihan Lie was panting as he looked at Bai Xiaochun, his feelings even more complicated than before. However, his determination to surpass him only continued to grow stronger.

Bai Xiaochun didn't chase any of the fleeing disciples. He quickly went over to Hou Yunfei and placed his palm onto his chest. Earthstring energy poured into him, restoring his Dao foundation. A moment later, the signs of a Tideflow once again appeared.

Hou Yunfei slowly opened his eyes, and when he saw Bai Xiaochun, he smiled.

Bai Xiaochun looked around at the other Spirit Stream Sect disciples as they reached Earthstring Foundation Establishment. None of them would be able to achieve three Tideflows, only two at the most. After all, even with Bai Xiaochun helping them, there still wasn't much earthstring energy left to split between everyone.

Despite that, everyone was profoundly shaken.

“Not enough earthstring energy....” Bai Xiaochun thought as he watched Hou Yunfei absorbing the energy. Then he looked up toward the lone remaining vortex up in the sky.

It was none other than Song Que, in the middle of his ninth Tideflow!

“You sent people to kill me and stop my nine Tideflows. Well, Bai Xiaochun isn’t the type of person who gets hit and doesn’t hit back! If I stop your Tideflow, Big Bro Hou will have more earthstring energy for himself!” His eyes flashed with cold light, but then he hesitated, as he remembered that there were many disciples here who needed someone to stand for them as Dharma protector.

Beihan Lie took a deep breath as he sensed that his own faded Tideflow was on the verge of resuming. “Bai Xiaochun, you go. We might have a beef with each other, but I have no desire for a second Master Limitless to arise in the Blood Stream Sect. You go stop Song Que. I’ll defend everyone here!”

Bai Xiaochun gave him a deep look, his heart filled with regret. After clasping hands and bowing deeply, he transformed into a beam of light that shot up toward Song Que!

# Chapter 161: Wreck Your Tideflow!

---

Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou were already in the process of bombarding Song Que's spell formation. Although the spell formation was cracked and crumbling, it still held.

Song Que's ninth vortex spun rapidly overhead, sucking in earthstring energy from all over the Fallen Sword World.

His eyes were closed, but they were still completely bloodshot. As he sat there cross-legged, he went all out with every resource at his disposal, which included absorbing earthstring energy via the energy nodes throughout the Fallen Sword World, which he had linked together as a spell formation.

Although no one could see those nodes, cracks were now starting form on them, especially the node in the location where Bai Xiaochun had first met Song Que outside the body of the sword. As the cracks spread out, the surface of the enormous, otherworldly sword began to destabilize to the point where it was starting to crumble.

However, the signs of the potential destruction of the sword were impossible to detect, even by Ouyang Jie outside on Mount Flamecrane.

"Must go faster!" Song Que howled inwardly. His hands were splayed on the ground in front of him, and his hair whipped about his head as he absorbed huge quantities of earthstring energy. As the vortex spun, he got closer and closer to completing his ninth

Tideflow, and the world around him trembled. Even the sky seemed to be weakening.

In fact, there was another trend that could not be detected except by someone sitting exactly where Song Que was sitting. In the very middle of the vortex up above in the weakening sky, there was... a strand of energy... that was so faint nobody would ever notice it!

It was completely different than earthstring energy, something that existed on a higher level... a completely shocking type of energy!

Only someone sitting exactly where Song Que was sitting would be able to detect it, the reason being that he was sitting on the last energy node in the Fallen Sword World! Song Que had selected this location to reach Foundation Establishment for a very specific reason!

As soon as Song Que sensed the energy, his heart began to beat with excitement. He had been waiting for this day for a very long time.

“The peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment doesn’t count for anything. That’s just the first step. What I’m really here for is... Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment! Only then will I have the power to crush anyone in my path after I get back to the sect. Then I can finally compete with aunt Song Junwan and that damned Xuemei to be the blood master of Middle Peak! As one of the four great blood masters, I would rank even higher than the grand elders in the Blood Stream Sect!” Song Que was already starting to get excited.



In terms of seniority, the blood masters of the Blood Stream Sect were on equal footing with the sect leader. From that peak level of power, all they had to do was take one more step to reach Ancestor Peak, which was an incredibly high position.

However, just as Song Que was about to complete his ninth Tideflow, a beam of light shot up toward him, which was none other than Bai Xiaochun. His eyes were completely bloodshot, and he radiated a murderous aura. A pair of wings could be seen behind him, every flap of which propelled him forward with incredible speed.

Combined with the power of nine Tideflows, he could move infinitely faster than anyone in the Qi Condensation stage, and it only took him a moment to reach Song Que's spell formation.

Almost instantly, incredible pressure exploded out from Bai Xiaochun, becoming a crushing force that caused Ghostfang's pupils to constrict. Worried that his own Dao foundation might be destabilized, he gave a cold harrumph and then backed up.

Shangguan Tianyou didn't even measure up to Ghostfang, and with the power of only five Tideflows, had no choice but to back up begrudgingly, chuckling bitterly.

As Bai Xiaochun approached like a blazing sun, Shangguan Tianyou felt himself trembling from the pressure that naturally weighed down from the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment.

“Song Que!” Bai Xiaochun roared. Inside the spell formation, a tremor ran through Song Que, but he wasn’t capable of opening his eyes. He felt a sensation of imminent danger, and his heart began to pound. Filled with a sensation of madness, he tried to get his Tideflow to end as quickly as possible.

But Bai Xiaochun’s voice was like thunder from the heavens. As it stepped into the perimeter of the spell formation, everything trembled. Then, he lifted his foot and stepped down onto the spell formation itself.

The ground quaked, and more than half of the spell formation shattered. Off to the side, Shangguan Tianyou’s heart was pounding, and Ghostfang had to work hard to suppress his desire to fight.

“Considering you tried to interrupt my ninth Tideflow, did you really think I would let you succeed in yours?!” He lifted his right hand, and golden light glittered as his fleshly body power erupted. Calling upon all the force of his Undying Gold Skin, he unleashed a fist strike.

The spell formation trembled, clearly on the verge of shattering. Bai Xiaochun took another step forward, and unleashed another fist strike. Then another, and another!

All four fist strikes were backed by the full power of his Undying Gold Skin. Each punch was filled with force which came from breaking through the first shackle of mortality, and burned with

Bai Xiaochun's rage and fury. After four such fist strikes, the spell formation protecting Song Que collapsed.

Finally, Song Que was revealed, sitting there cross-legged in meditation, completely unable to move even a muscle.

Bai Xiaochun didn't stop. He strode forward and then swished his sleeve, causing violet qi to stream out and form the shape of a huge violet cauldron. It seemed almost completely corporeal, its surface covered with magical symbols and designs of birds and beasts. Under Bai Xiaochun's control, the magical symbols began to swirl around the cauldron, and the birds and beasts began to move as if they were alive. At the same time....

The violet cauldron smashed downward toward Song Que.

"Since you can't end the ninth Tideflow on your own, I'll help you!" Massive rumbling sounds echoed out as the violet cauldron descended with tens of thousands of kilograms of force.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as Song Que's personal defenses attempted to protect him. When the cauldron hit the light of his defenses, they shattered. Then, streams of magical items flew out, but they were just as easily crushed. Finally, the cauldron actually slammed into Song Que.

A bloodcurdling scream echoed out of his mouth, and his eyes opened. He had just been on the verge of finishing his ninth Tideflow, but had been ripped away from it by Bai Xiaochun's interference. The partially complete ninth Dao foundation in his

dantian region shattered into pieces.

At the same time, the earthstring energy that had been brought together by the ninth Tideflow began to flow away from Song Que, rapidly spreading out and merging back into the world around it.

However, for some unknown reason, Song Que managed to force the escaping earthstring energy into a column of light that shot up into the clouds, making it merge back into the world even more quickly than before.

At the same time, the ninth vortex up above him not only ceased moving, it actually shattered into pieces.

All of the rest of the disciples throughout the Fallen Sword World were completely shocked and began to cry out in surprise.

“Song Que failed!!”

“Bai Xiaochun interrupted his ninth Tideflow!”

“Heavens! Bai Xiaochun couldn’t get Song Que to hate him more even if he killed him! He’s destroyed his Dao!”

Everyone was so shocked that they were going mad. Xu Xiaoshan had been rushing over from off in the distance, but as soon as he saw what was happening, he stopped in place and didn’t dare to get any closer.

Further off in the distance, Nine-Isles was wiping the blood off of his mouth and rotating his cultivation base. When he sensed what was happening, his eyes shone with terror.

“Bai Xiaochun... is invincible!!”

Ghostfang clenched his fists tightly. He wasn't a person who was easily affected by emotions, but as of the moment, he was filled with countless indecipherable feelings.

Shangguan Tianyou was left gasping. He felt like his heart had been bitten by a poisonous viper, and madness and envy filled him completely. “Bai Xiaochun! If it weren't for you, all of that would be mine!!”

As everyone was shaken, Song Que fell back at top speed, blood spraying out of his mouth. His eyes were crimson, and his hair was in disarray. Looking like he wanted to eat Bai Xiaochun alive, he let out a miserable howl.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

His ninth Tideflow was a failure, leaving him with only eight Tideflows. As his Dao foundation stabilized, his cultivation base became that of the Foundation Establishment stage. Even as he retreated, his power increased far beyond what it had been before.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered, and he blurred into motion,

appearing a moment later directly in front of Song Que. Then, his two fingers shot out like lightning.

### Throat Crushing Grasp!

Just before they landed on Song Que, Song Que performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Then he opened his mouth and spit out a finger-nail sized blood sphere.

Despite being at the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, Bai Xiaochun instantly sensed that he was in incredible danger.

The spiritual power within that blood sphere was terrifying!

For some reason, there was something familiar about this crisis, although Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure exactly what it was.

When his two fingers made contact with the blood sphere, a shockwave blasted out in all directions, along with a deafening boom.

As the force of the shockwave spread out in all directions, Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou were forced backward, and the lands down below were crushed.

Blood oozed out of the corners of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he staggered backward several steps, reeling in shock. Despite the fact that he had his Undying Gold Skin, the blast from the blood sphere

had actually injured him. Although the injuries weren't serious, they were shocking nonetheless.

The sense of familiarity he had experienced moments ago had grown even more intense when he made contact with the blood sphere. And yet, he still couldn't figure out why that was.

“Why does this seem so familiar!?!? Just what exactly is that blood sphere!?”

Bai Xiaochun looked up to see Song Que flying backward like a kite with its string cut, blood spraying out of his mouth, his chest caved in. Clearly, his injuries were much more serious than Bai Xiaochun's.

Because he had been interrupted in the middle of his ninth Tideflow, his cultivation base was still in the process of stabilizing. He was definitely less powerful than Bai Xiaochun, and furthermore, he had suffered a backlash injury because of the blood sphere.

Even still, he looked up with maddened viciousness at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was just about to launch another attack when Song Que turned and fled. Even as he sped away, he produced a priceless teleportation jade amulet, which he crushed. A moment later, teleportation power snatched him up, and he vanished.

When he reappeared, he was hundreds of kilometers away, fleeing at top speed.

“I hope he didn’t notice,” Song Que murmured through gritted teeth. “Dammit, he showed up just a moment too soon. One step away, just one step.... Oh well, it doesn’t matter. Even if I didn’t reach the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, I can still surpass Bai Xiaochun. And once I do, he’s dead!” With that, he produced a Feng Shui compass which featured nine glowing dots of light. Those were none other than the energy nodes he had activated throughout the Fallen Sword World!



# Chapter 162: Heavenstring Energy

---

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered at the sight of Song Que's precious jade amulet of teleportation. Just when he was about to give chase, he suddenly paused and looked down.

The ground down below had been completely flattened by the exploding blood sphere....

“Hold on a second....” Bai Xiaochun said, looking more than a little suspicious. “If Song Que had a jade amulet of teleportation, then it would have made more sense for him to use it the moment I interrupted his ninth Tideflow. After the collapse of the vortex, he was in the worst position possible!

“But instead of using the jade amulet, he used that blood sphere to fight me. He even got injured in the process. Although it seemed like he was really pissed off, now that I think about it, it seems more like... he was trying to erase evidence down below.” After analyzing the matter a bit more, his eyes glittered.

“After I interrupted him, two things happened. The first was that his ninth Tideflow was destroyed, and the earthstring energy scattered. That was normal. But what was abnormal was how his earthstring energy formed a column of light that shot up into the sky and dispersed even more rapidly than before.

“Although it might seem innocuous at first, those two things together... are very suspicious!

“He’s hiding something!

“He’s hiding something that has to do with the sky, and with his spell formation on the ground. To figure out what it is he’s hiding, I should compare things now with how they were before. Maybe then I can deduce the answer.” Looking up into the sky, he confirmed that the Tideflow vortex had indeed dissipated. Because of how Song Que had directly returned the earthstring energy, some smaller, residual vortexes remained, but they were nothing like the larger vortex from before.

“Because of the ninth Tideflow vortex, and the waning earthstring energy, the sky grew weak....” After confirming this by observing a few different locations up above, he looked back down at the ground.

Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou were still there off to the side. Ghostfang looked suspiciously at what Bai Xiaochun was doing, whereas Shangguan Tianyou laughed coldly in his heart, then turned and left.

Bai Xiaochun ignored Shangguan Tianyou as he studied the ground below.

“This normally wouldn’t be a good place for Foundation Establishment. But Song Que selected this location for a reason. Then he wiped out the evidence when he left.” Frowning, Bai Xiaochun began to walk along, taking time to look up into the sky with every step.

Soon, he was standing in the exact spot where Song Que had been sitting cross-legged. There, he looked up into the sky again, and was just about to take another step, when suddenly his expression flickered. He stopped and stood there, staring up into the sky.

At first, everything seemed normal, even calm compared to before. But then, he sensed something. He couldn't be sure if it was real or not, but based on his nine Tideflows cultivation base, the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, he suddenly got the feeling... that there was something up there so powerful that it was terrifying even to himself!

It was a pressure that filled him with intense desire, something that seemed connected to his nine spiritual seas.

“That's....” At first he couldn't believe it, but then he began to tremble and even pant. Without another thought, he leaped up into the air and flew off into the distance.

Ghostfang frowned as he watched Bai Xiaochun leaving. Then he headed over to the same spot where Bai Xiaochun had just been standing, and looked up into the sky. However, he didn't notice anything out of the ordinary. Only someone like Song Que, with a special magical item, and who had activated numerous energy nodes, would be able to do so. Or... someone at the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, with the power of nine Tideflows.

In fact, the latter would find it even easier to sense what was above, and with more clarity.

Eventually, Ghostfang shook his head and left.

Not too much time passed before Bai Xiaochun returned, looking very excited, Hou Yunfei in tow. Hou Yunfei was just beginning to resume his Tideflow.

“Big Bro Hou, start your Tideflow here. I’ll help you speed things along. I suspect that the sky above this point has a unique aura!!”

Hou Yunfei smiled. Considering the utter faith he had in Bai Xiaochun, he didn’t feel the need to ask any further questions, and quickly sat down cross-legged and closed his eyes.

Standing behind him, Bai Xiaochun reached out and placed his palm onto his back. His nine spiritual seas began to rotate as he poured power into Hou Yunfei to help speed up his Tideflow.

Before long, his fourth Tideflow appeared, creating a vortex that connected with the sky above. Soon, earthstring energy was surging toward him from all directions.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t happy with the speed, though, so he continued to rotate his cultivation base and use the Tideflow power of the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment to push Hou Yunfei faster and faster. Soon a fifth and sixth Tideflow also appeared.

Bai Xiaochun was the only person who could do something like

this, using the special power of nine Tideflows. He also had to pay a steep price for it. Considering he was only helping one person, it was a price he could pay. If he were helping two people, he would slip from his spot at the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment. In any case, he had planned to help Hou Yunfei all along.

Hou Yunfei's heart trembled. He knew that what he was experiencing now was unimaginable good fortune, as three Tideflows simultaneously sucked in earthstring energy from everywhere.

“Xiaochun....” Hou Yunfei said, his heart filled with warmth.

Bai Xiaochun smiled. Worried that Hou Yunfei would read too much into the situation, he quickly said, “Bros like us always help each other. Besides, I need this earthstring energy cleared away so I can see things clearly.”

However, Hou Yunfei knew that even if that were true, Bai Xiaochun still could have chosen to take advantage of the situation for himself in some way. It was definitely not in vain that Hou Yunfei had chosen to defend Bai Xiaochun earlier.

Bai Xiaochun wanted to help Hou Yunfei form a seventh Tideflow, but Hou Yunfei had reached his limit. Furthermore, his three combined Tideflows had caused the sky to once again grow weak!

As it did, Bai Xiaochun could clearly sense... a very faint aura

which was quickly becoming more clear.

It was an aura that seemed holy, as if a great Dao were opening its eyes, causing all of the world, all of this heaven and earth, to prostrate in worship!

After double and then triple-checking, Bai Xiaochun began to tremble, and his eyes shone with madness.

“Heaven... Heavenstring energy!!

“The sect leader was right. The Fallen Sword World really does have a strand of heavenstring energy! That means that Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment is possible!

“Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment... can add five hundred years of longevity!!!” Bai Xiaochun almost looked as if he had been struck by lightning; his flesh and blood were trembling with excitement.

At the same time, a few hundred kilometers away, Song Que had sat down cross-legged in a mountainous valley, where he was fiddling with his Feng Shui compass. After a moment, his expression flickered, and he looked over in Bai Xiaochun’s direction, and the rapidly weakening sky.

His eyes went wide, and his mind began to spin.

“Not good!!” he said, suddenly feeling wracked with anxiety. The

Blood Stream Sect had spent years investigating that strand of heavenstring energy. Generation after generation of disciples had provided information, all the way down until Master Limitless reached the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment. Only then was the information completed. Overall, the sect had spent several thousand years performing auguries and other calculations to ascertain the method to reveal the heavenstring energy!

Because of that, Song Que's generation was one of the most important in recent history, and he was one of the most important disciples of that generation. He had paid an unimaginable price to win this chance from Master Limitless.

He had made countless preparations, including activating all of the energy nodes, which had taken a huge amount of time. All of that was to ensure that he could collect that strand of heavenstring energy.

The previous plan had been to reach Foundation Establishment on the energy node where he had begun his Tideflows. After the ninth Tideflow ended, he would use its power along with the support of the Feng Shui compass to capture the heavenstring energy, absorb it, and then reach Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment.

But then Bai Xiaochun interrupted him, and he'd been forced to wipe away the evidence and head to a slightly inferior energy node. The new plan was to rely completely on the Feng Shui compass to slowly capture the heavenstring energy.

How could he ever have imagined that Bai Xiaochun would piece

together the clues and provoke the descent of the strand of heavenstring energy? Although Bai Xiaochun was the only one who could sense it at the moment, as the energy continued to descend, all of the cultivators in the Fallen Sword World would be able to detect it.

“Dammit, dammit, DAMMIT!!” he raged, his hair flying around in disarray.

“I can’t mess with any more advanced preparations, and I can’t wait any longer. By the time that strand of heavenstring energy fixes onto a landing spot down below, it will be too late!

“I don’t care if everybody notices, I need to capture that heavenstring energy before it descends completely!!” Seemingly teetering on the edge of insanity, Song Que bit the tip of his tongue and spat some blood onto the Feng Shui compass. Then his hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture as he pushed down onto the compass and howled.

“Heavenstring energy, descend here!” As soon as the blood splashed onto the Feng Shui compass, a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering power erupted out, piercing through the air as it shot up into the sky. There, it connected with the heavenstring energy, and began to pull it down!

Moments ago, the heavenstring energy had been slowly descending, but now... it appeared in the open and began to drop down!



The entire sky immediately turned golden, and shafts of dazzling light shot down from the location of the energy strand. It almost looked like a sun descending.

That strand of energy existed above all other things; it radiated the might of a heavenly Dao, and instantly caught the attention of everyone present.

It was completely and utterly unique within the Fallen Sword World!

It was something uncharacteristically rare in the world of cultivation, something stunning and breathtaking that few people would ever have a chance to lay eyes on.

It was... five hundred years of longevity, something above earthstring energy, and the ultimate peak of all Foundation Establishment!

As it took corporeal form, it became something like a wisp of golden smoke that radiated the will of a heavenly Dao, which spread out to fill all of the Fallen Sword World.

All cultivators began to tremble violently as they were filled with an instinctive hunger, something which vastly surpassed that which was mortal. It was something... that came from deep within their blood!

It was a hope that surpassed reason. It was insanity!

“Heaven... heavenstring energy!”

“That’s... heavenstring energy!”

“It’s mine!” In the blink of an eye, virtually all of the cultivators began to howl with unprecedented excitement and madness!

The wounded Nine-Isles began to tremble as he threw his head back and roared.

“Heavenstring energy!”

Ghostfang, Shangguan Tianyou, and all of the other Foundation Establishment cultivators were going completely mad, and the Qi Condensation cultivators were the same!

All of them sprang into action, converging from all directions!

As of this moment, sects didn’t matter; everyone devolved into chaotic fighting.

# Chapter 163: No Quarter Asked, None Given!

---

For most cultivators, when it came to heavenstring energy, there was no such thing as cooperation with fellow disciples. There was only competition.

Regardless of whether someone had already reached Foundation Establishment or not, as long as you got heavenstring energy, you could use it to reach Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!

Even the weakest level of Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment was above the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment. To cultivators, reaching that stage was like entering the heavens with a single bound!

If Song Que acquired it, then considering he already had an eight Tideflows earthstring cultivation base, then when he reached Heaven-Dao, then he would be nearly at the peak of power.

On the other hand, if Bai Xiaochun acquired it, then he... would become something that hadn't appeared in the eastern Lower Reaches of the Heavenspan River in thousands of years.... A nine Tideflows Earthstring Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment expert!

He would be the most powerful type of Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivator there could be!

However, what mattered most to Bai Xiaochun was not how powerful he would become, it was the 500 years of longevity.

Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment came with 100 years.  
Earthstring Foundation Establishment came with 200 years.  
Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment... came with 500 years!

In the cultivation world, which had a history that stretched back tens of thousands of years into the past, 500 years didn't seem like very much. But to mortals, that was equivalent to ten generations. Furthermore, it was exactly what Bai Xiaochun constantly dreamed about!

How could he not go crazy about it!?

He wasn't the only one. Most people present were driven mad. There were only a few cultivators who were in the middle of Tideflows, or who perhaps had other reasons, suppressed their excitement. Hou Yunfei was one of them, as well as the other Spirit Stream Sect disciples whom Bai Xiaochun had helped to acquire earthstring energy. They chose to stand aside.

But everyone else didn't harbor even a single thought of giving up!

Instantly, the hundred or so remaining survivors in the Fallen Sword World all sprang into actions. Hoarse shouts rose up as they flew into the sky toward the descending strand of golden heavenstring energy.

Bai Xiaochun was the fastest to react. Just before taking to flight, he slapped his chest, causing a black light to flash off of his wrist and gather near his chest. It transformed into a black pearl, which

was the life-saving magical item Li Qinghou had given him. After pushing the pearl down onto Hou Yunfei's back, it melted, and spread out to cover him, which would protect him as he completed his Foundation Establishment. With that, Bai Xiaochun flew up into the air.

“That heavenstring energy is mine!” he howled. He seemed to have gone just as mad as everyone else, and he only had one thought in his mind.... He had to get that heavenstring energy, no matter who he had to fight to do so!

That heavenstring energy was essentially his own life!

“If you steal that heavenstring energy, you're stealing my longevity!” he growled. He flew at top speed up into the sky, moving so quickly that he was the first to close in on the heavenstring energy and reach out to grab it.

However, just when he was about to grab it, Song Que emerged from the immortal's cave he had carved out. Blinding light shot out from his Feng Shui compass, which altered the course of the heavenstring energy.

Just as Bai Xiaochun's hand was about close down onto it, it split apart into two pieces and slipped through his fingers. One part, the smaller half, changed directions and headed toward Song Que, while the larger part sped off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were bright red as he ignored the smaller strand of energy and focused on the larger one. Rushing after it, he

was just about to reach out and grab it when Ghostfang threw his head back and roared, causing ghost qi to surge around him. Disregarding any potential negative ramifications to his cultivation base, he caused a powerful mist to rise up around him, within which echoed ghostly weeping and howling. At the same time, a ghostly hand stretched out from the mist, radiating an intense, murderous aura.

Back when he had been opposing Song Que and trying to destroy his spell formation, he had been worried about the instability of his Dao foundation, and hadn't resorted to going all out. But now he didn't seem to care about that. He drew upon all the power he was capable of, causing his battle prowess to rise dramatically.

“Beat it!” he howled, shooting up into the air to fight with Bai Xiaochun over the heavenstring energy.

In the blink of an eye, they slammed into each other. Ghostfang attacked with deadly force, causing rumbling sounds to fill heaven and earth. Shockingly, ten enormous ghost hands could be seen within the mist, each one of which radiated the power of Foundation Establishment as they bore down on Bai Xiaochun.

“You think I'll just back down like that?!” Bai Xiaochun retorted. Waving his sleeve, he caused violet qi to swirl out and form a huge cauldron that shot toward the ten ghost hands. Bolstered by the power of nine Tideflows, the enormous violet cauldron was more powerful than ever, to a terrifying level.

Rumbling sounds rose up as Ghostfang's ten ghost hands collapsed into pieces. Blood sprayed out of Ghostfang's mouth as

he was shoved backward by a powerful force. Bai Xiaochun's Undying Gold Skin glittered with radiant light, making him look like a celestial warrior. Although he seemed unfazed by the encounter just now, the truth was that his qi and blood were in chaos.

Ghostfang had reached seven Tideflows, only two less than him. Plus, they had been relatively evenly matched in Qi Condensation. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had broken through the first shackle of mortality, and was thus able to crush him.

After forcing Ghostfang away, Bai Xiaochun sped forward and reached out toward the strand of heavenstring energy. However, it was at that moment that a howl of fury tore through the air.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” A beam of shocking sword light shot through the air heading directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

Within the light was Shangguan Tianyou, who was ignoring any potential danger to his Dao foundation, and was even calling upon a secret magic to loosen a reincarnation seal inside of him. A murderous sword appeared which seemed capable of slicing apart the heavens, and it was stabbing directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's face flickered from the sense of danger he felt because of Shangguan Tianyou's sword. As the sword qi closed in, his eyes began to shine, and he performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Waving both hands out to either side, he summoned the image of an enormous dragon, which howled as it charged toward the sword qi.

At the same time, a gigantic mammoth appeared behind him, which reared up on its hind legs before smashing its feet down toward Shangguan Tianyou.

It was none other than the manifestation of the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture, which had become a divine ability after he had fully mastered it.

When the divine ability slammed into Shangguan Tianyou, ear-splitting rumbling sounds spread out. Bai Xiaochun stopped in place as the dragon and the mammoth collapsed, and a powerful force slammed into him. However, golden light flickered, and the power was suppressed.

As for Shangguan Tianyou, he coughed up mouthful after mouthful of blood as he staggered backward. At the same time, his body withered visibly; obviously, the sword attack he had just unleashed had come at a hefty price.

Because of the delays, the heavenstring energy was now far off in the distance, where a dozen or so disciples from the other three sects were already starting to fight over it.

Ghostfang gritted his teeth and abandoned any attempts to attack Bai Xiaochun, opting instead to pursue the heavenstring energy. Shangguan Tianyou did the same.

Eyes bloodshot, Bai Xiaochun flapped his wings and pierced through the air, easily passing them up. As he blasted into the



group of fighting cultivators, he waved his sleeve, sending power bursting out, which transformed into an attack that sent everyone in the area tumbling backward. Finally, Bai Xiaochun's hand... closed around the strand of heavenstring energy.

This time, he was ready, and as soon as he grabbed the heavenstring energy, he began absorbing it into his right index finger.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had taken the heavenstring energy caused killing intent to surge among everyone present.

“He can't absorb it immediately. Cut off his finger and take the energy away!”

“Kill him!”

There were a dozen or so cultivators from the other three sects, and all of them attacked like mad. Quite a few were in the Foundation Establishment stage, which ensured that their attacks shook everything in the area. The Blood Stream Sect disciples unleashed particularly bizarre magical techniques. One of them even summoned a gargoyle, which lunged toward Bai Xiaochun as if it wanted to consume him.

Another of the Blood Stream Sect disciples who seemed particularly strong attacked by summoning the illusory image of a huge hand. It seemed very familiar to Bai Xiaochun, but he had no time to think about it at the moment. Being besieged by a dozen or so people, all of them attacking from different directions, caused

his eyes to erupt with killing intent.

Although he feared death, the events with the Luo Chen Clan had long since impressed upon Bai Xiaochun the fact that sometimes the only way to make sure he didn't die was to kill the people who were a threat!

On this day, if these people didn't die, then he would. When it came to heavenstring energy, there were no reasonable discussions, only the seizing of opportunities!

"All of you... are seeking your own deaths!" he growled. Other than the people he'd killed upon first stepping into Foundation Establishment, he hadn't harbored any desire to kill anyone else in the Fallen Sword Abyss, not even the disciples of the other three sects.

But now... it was time to unleash a slaughter!!

Even as his voice echoed out, he pushed his Undying Gold Skin to its limit.

A boom echoed out as he sloughed off the divine abilities they had launched against him. His qi and blood were roiling, and blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth. However, he moved so quickly that he only left afterimages behind as he unleashed a fist strike against each of the people besieging him!

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

Each fist strike was backed with killing intent. He had already broken through the first shackle of mortality, and was at the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment. His blows were like a deadly wind that slammed into the surrounding disciples of the three sects. All of them trembled, and then dissolved into mists of blood.

Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou had no other option than to retreat in the face of such ferocity.

One of the Blood Stream Sect disciples, in the moment before he exploded, unleashed some unknown divine ability that allowed his soul to flee his body, leaving behind nothing but a husk. As his body died, his face rippled, and a mask was revealed. The soul entered the mask, and instantly attempted to flee, but Bai Xiaochun noticed and grabbed it. After squeezing the mask hard, he realized he couldn't destroy it, so he poured some cultivation base power into it to seal it, then threw it into his bag of holding.

By this point, all of the dozen or so disciples who had attacked him were dead. And yet, more disciples were closing in from off in the distance. One among their number shot out in front of the pack.

“Leave that heavenstring energy and get out of here, Bai Xiaochun!” It was none other than Xu Xiaoshan. Mixed emotions could be seen on his face as he waved his hand, causing nine huge coffins to appear. Based on the sealing marks on the coffins, they could only be opened by someone in the Foundation Establishment stage. Moments later, Xu Xiaoshan's Foundation Establishment

cultivation base erupted with power, and the stone coffins began to open. An aura of death spread out, and nine zombies appeared, all of them sporting long, black hair!

Each and every one had the aura of Foundation Establishment!

# Chapter 164: So What!?

---

Bai Xiaochun had tangled with the Blood Stream Sect before, and even back then, he could tell that their magical techniques were like the name of their sect: something akin to a devilish Dao. Assuming that the Spirit Stream Sect's information about the Blood Stream Sect was correct and not an exaggeration, then their magical techniques really were bizarre to the extreme!

Whether it was the huge hand that appeared behind the body refinement cultivator, which Bai Xiaochun found so strangely familiar, or the gargoyles, or the corpse-refining magic of Xu Xiaoshan, all of them seemed to abound with intensely murderous auras.

As Xu Xiaoshan closed in, he waved his finger at Bai Xiaochun, and the nine black-haired zombies shot toward Bai Xiaochun like nine meteors.

The aura of death they exuded rose high into the air, and they let out piercing cries that locked down the entire area around Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered as he sprang into motion, golden light shining around him. His two fingers flickered like lightning as they shot out and crushed down onto the neck of one of the black-haired zombies.

A cracking sound could be heard, and the zombie's head tilted to the side, but it wasn't dead. It punched out at Bai Xiaochun, who

leapt to the side, hair flying around him as he shoved out with his palm.

That motion was backed by the explosive power of nine Tideflows, creating a gale-force wind that swept out in all directions. The power of the dragon and mammoth also appeared, becoming a powerful attack which shoved all of the black-haired zombies away. Then, Bai Xiaochun launched himself toward Xu Xiaoshan.

Xu Xiaoshan's pupils constricted as Bai Xiaochun unleashed a fist strike.

A boom rang out, and Xu Xiaoshan coughed up a mouthful of blood, simultaneously unleashing a host of defensive magical items. Despite all of his defenses, he was still seriously injured and thrown back several hundred meters by the power of the fist.

At the same time, Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou unleashed a combined attack.

Bai Xiaochun didn't pause for even a moment. Turning, he unleashed all possible speed to escape. He knew he couldn't easily defeat Ghostfang, Xu Xiaoshan, and Shangguan Tianyou at the same time, and also didn't want to let them fire off any truly deadly attacks.

Even as he fled, the disciples from the other three sects closed in. Although they all coveted the heavenstring energy, considering that Bai Xiaochun had it, they didn't dare to try to attack him on

their own. However, as a group, they were confident enough to try to slow him down and give Ghostfang, Xu Xiaoshan and Shangguan Tianyou a chance go at him.

If that happened, it wouldn't necessarily be impossible for them to get the heavenstring energy in the end!

Many of the Profound Stream Sect disciples also possessed shadow projections. They could unleash illusory images, some weak, some strong, that allowed them to attack Bai Xiaochun from a distance.

The Pill Stream Sect disciples also had their own unique methods of attack, including poisons, exploding pills, and the like.

The glow of magical techniques surrounded Bai Xiaochun constantly, and booms filled the air. A grave expression could be seen on his face. Even with his Undying Gold Skin, the bombardment was a big headache.

“You people really are looking to die!” Killing intent flickered in his eyes as he suddenly transformed into a long streak of light that shot toward the surrounding disciples. In the blink of an eye, he slammed into one of the Profound Stream Sect disciples, who spun off to the side and then exploded.

With that, Bai Xiaochun emerged from the blockade, but even as he did, a voice could be heard coming from up ahead.

“Bai Xiaochun, we might be from the same sect, but that doesn’t mean we can’t fight over heavenstring energy!” It was Beihan Lie, striding forward with a burning sun held in his outstretched hand, a sun which was rapidly turning black. Apparently, this was his Sunset Incantation.

“Beihan Lie!” Bai Xiaochun said, frowning. Almost at the same moment that Beihan Lie attacked, a beam of light appeared off in the distance, sending a screaming wind blasting out in all directions, which was filled with the power of the Exterminating Obliteration Technique. It was none other than Nine-Isles.

He didn’t care that he was injured, or that Bai Xiaochun was unnaturally powerful. He still was ready to fight.

He unleashed his attack in almost perfect unison with Beihan Lie. Magical symbols of obliteration exploded out, joining the pitch black sun to race toward Bai Xiaochun.

The massive explosion made it impossible for Bai Xiaochun to proceed forward. Moments later, Ghostfang, Xu Xiaoshan, and Shangguan Tianyou arrived, and soon he was dealing with five besiegers.

Each and every one of those five people was a spectacular Chosen among Chosen, and when they joined forces, their power was beyond description.

The other disciples in the area now felt a bit of hope. More than a hundred people closed in from all sides, joining forces to try to kill



Bai Xiaochun and snatch the heavenstring energy.

“Bai Xiaochun, you might be strong, but you can’t beat all of us together. Hand over that heavenstring energy!”

“Bai Xiaochun, Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment is too important. We’d fight anybody who had that energy. There is no such thing as a fellow disciple in this situation. It’s survival of the fittest!”

“Give up that heavenstring energy!”

Even as people shouted out, Ghostfang blurred into motion, exploding with energy as he unleashed the power of his cultivation base. Shockingly, he transformed into a ghost finger! Although it was only a finger, it was huge compared to the ghost hand from before. It filled half the sky, and caused everything to shake violently as it crushed down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Shangguan Tianyou’s eyes flickered with intense killing intent. After taking a deep breath, he sent sword qi streaming out of all of the pores on his body. It was almost as if his own qi, blood, soul, and cultivation base were manifesting externally, transforming into an enormous heavenly sword that slashed down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Xu Xiaoshan let out a powerful roar as his forehead split open. Unexpectedly, a beam of blood-colored light shot out, which transformed into a black-haired zombie. It seemed ancient, and as soon as it appeared, an aura of death spread out that distorted the

entire area. Brandishing its long, claw-like fingernails and razor-sharp fangs, it leaped toward Bai Xiaochun.

Things weren't over yet, though. Beihan Lie gritted his teeth and closed his eyes, causing black flames to erupt off of him. They covered his body, spreading wider and wider as he transformed into a black sun which soared up into the air and then dropped down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Then there was Nine-Isles. A piercing whistling sound could be heard as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Magical symbols streamed out, each one of which burst with the power of the Exterminating Obliteration Technique. The magical symbols then rapidly formed together into a single thread that seemed capable of slicing through anything and everything. Nine-Isles was left ashen-faced and coughing up blood. He even seemed to age visibly.

Five top Chosen were all attacking simultaneously!

In addition to them were a host of Qi Condensation disciples, all of whom launched their most powerful magical techniques. The entire area lit up with colorful lights as countless divine abilities bore down on Bai Xiaochun.

The intense danger of the situation caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp. By this point, he had already assimilated about half of the heavenstring energy, and it was coursing through his qi passageways into his nine spiritual seas. If he tried to stop the process at this point, it could have serious negative ramifications.

Besides, he wasn't willing to give up the heavenstring energy after just having acquired it. Furthermore, when it came to five top Chosen attacking him at the same time, he had one reaction:

So what?!

Eyes glittering, he took a deep breath and closed his eyes. Even as the countless divine abilities and magical techniques rumbled toward him, he lifted both hands into the air and then murmured two words!

“Waterswamp... Kingdom!”

This would be his first time unleashing the complete Waterswamp Kingdom with a Foundation Establishment cultivation base!

As soon as the words left his mouth, everything in the area turned hazy. In the blink of an eye, heaven and earth vanished, and the area became a huge watery swamp. Water vapor filled the area, to the point where hair and clothes alike dripped with moisture.

An indescribably powerful aura roiled out, something that far exceeded early Foundation Establishment. This was more like mid Foundation Establishment!

A magical technique like this, which seemingly broke past the

level of one's cultivation base... was a secret magic!

Of course, there were weak secret magics and strong ones. And although the Waterswamp Kingdom and Ghosts Haunt the Night were equally famous, Bai Xiaochun was at the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment. He had already gained enlightenment of his life essence spirit, and had even broken through the first shackle of mortality. Because of all those reasons, his Waterswamp Kingdom vastly exceeded Ghostfang's Ghosts Haunt the Night!

When he unleashed it, it could destroy the heavens and crush the earth!

The faces of the five great Chosen all fell, and the reaction of the other cultivators was exactly the same. In that very instant, all of their magics were locked down and began to tremble on the verge of destruction.

“We can't let him keep this up!”

“Attack!!” Everyone was crying out in alarm. At the same time, the magical techniques of the five great Chosen sped up. Rumbling sounds could be heard as they descended upon Bai Xiaochun. However, that was when Bai Xiaochun's eyes suddenly snapped open!

Instantly, an enormous mountain peak appeared that could shake heaven and earth. It rose up from the 30,000-meter-wide waterswamp, superseding the world, rising high up into the sky!

The mountain peak was vastly enormous, and erupted with a shocking aura that could topple mountains and drain seas. Indescribable pressure pushed down onto everything, crushing everything in its path!

It was as if it wished to flatten everything in existence!

The magical techniques of the five great Chosen were destroyed like dried weeds!

Blood sprayed out of the mouths of the five Chosen, and expressions of astonishment could be seen on their faces. They were sent flying away, their bodies completely beyond their own control. As for the Qi Condensation cultivators, they let out bloodcurdling screams as the pressure crushed down onto them. One by one, they began to explode, blood spraying out like blooming flowers!

They were being crushed out of existence, destroyed in body and soul!

# Chapter 165: Seizing Heavenstring Energy!

---

That mountain was actually an indescribably gigantic beast!

In fact, it was so large that no one could even see what it looked like. All they could make out in the 30,000-meter waterswamp was a gigantic bone spur!

Even more terrifying was that the base of the spur wasn't even visible. 30,000 meters wasn't big enough for the entirety of the spur to be revealed.

It was difficult to imagine... exactly how large that beast was!

“Th-this... this is the Waterswamp Kingdom?!?!”

“Impossible!!!”

“The Waterswamp Kingdom is a secret magic of the Spirit Stream Sect, but Bai Xiaochun's version is completely shocking!!” The five Chosen were completely shaken. Ghostfang and Beihan Lie had it a bit better off than the others; they had been prepared for something like this. Even still, they were astonished by what was happening.

As for Nine-Isles and Xu Xiaoshan, they had never seen anything like the Waterswamp Kingdom before, and were so terrified that their scalps were numb.

Most shocked of all was Shangguan Tianyou. His hair was completely disheveled, and blood was oozing out of his mouth. He was so scared he looked like a wooden chicken; never in 10,000 years would he be willing to admit that Bai Xiaochun was stronger than him. And yet, he had no choice. Bai Xiaochun... was far, far more powerful than he was.

“Back in the Chosen battles, we weren’t that far apart from each other. But now, things are so different....”

As of this moment, the sky was going dark, and the lands were quaking.

Within the 30,000-meter waterswamp, there was only the enormous bone spur. Compared to that spur, the cultivators were like bugs, whereas Bai Xiaochun was like an immortal being with the world in his hands!

Massive rumbling stretched from the highest heavens to the deepest depths of the earth!

Not too far away, Song Que was in the middle of absorbing the bit of heavenstring energy that he’d snatched. But now, his mind was trembling. Earlier, he had intentionally split the heavenstring energy, hoping that while Bai Xiaochun and the others fought over the larger strand, he would be free to make away with the bit he had. But now, the fluctuations speeding out from Bai Xiaochun’s location left him gasping.

“Dammit. Those fluctuations....” Shocked, he tried to speed up

the absorption process.

Bai Xiaochun was slaughtering everyone near him!

He had never slaughtered people like this before. His eyes shone with a fierce light, and he was trembling a bit, both visibly and mentally. His reaction had been instinctive; despite being at the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment with nine Tideflows, he still feared death. Therefore, he had no choice but to resort to fighting and killing in this situation.

That was especially true considering that so many people had been trying to rob him of his heavenstring energy. To him, that was the same as robbing him of his life, leaving him no choice other than to go all out.

The shocking Waterswamp Kingdom caused the five great Chosen to fall back, blood spraying out of their mouths, their expressions those of shock and astonishment. Virtually all of the Qi Condensation disciples exploded, creating haunting flowers of blood that filled the area.

There were a dozen or so people off in the distance who were outside of the range of Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom. Their faces were ashen as they observed the devilish spectacle playing out in front of them. As of this moment, they were left gasping, and the frenzy they had felt because of the heavenstring energy faded away. Cold sweat popped out all over their bodies as they backed up.



“He’s so brutal! Is he really from the Spirit Stream Sect? He’s even more violent than the Blood Stream Sect people!”

“How vicious! That attack... wounded the five great Chosen, and killed dozens and dozens of Qi Condensation disciples!!”

Finally, Bai Xiaochun took to motion, speeding off into the distance. Ghostfang and the other Chosen had faces as pale as death as they watched him leave. None of them dared to chase him.

As they thought back to what had just occurred, they were sure that they had just had a brush with the aura of Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, leaving them no choice but to quash any desire they had to try to steal the heavenstring energy. The lingering fear they felt in their hearts forced them to admit that even if they tried to defeat him, they would fail....

Bai Xiaochun sped along for a bit, trembling and coughing up blood. His face was also pale; despite being at the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, crushing five Chosen and a host of Qi Condensation disciples couldn’t be accomplished without being injured himself.

Without his Undying Gold Skin, those injuries would have been even more serious. Thankfully, the Undying Live Forever Technique gave him regenerative capabilities that far exceeded any ordinary disciple, and his body was already repairing itself.

“Last but not least, Song Que!

“He grabbed the smaller strand of heavenstring energy... and went in this direction!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were completely bloodshot; by this point, he had already absorbed quite a bit of the heavenstring energy into his spiritual seas, and his aura was already beginning to change.

However, he could tell that the amount he had wasn’t enough to fuel a full Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment. Furthermore, he could clearly sense the smaller strand of heavenstring energy up ahead; it was like a bright fire burning on a moonless night.

“Song Que was prepared for the heavenstring energy to split apart; maybe he even made it happen!”

Without pausing for even a moment. Bai Xiaochun sped along.

In the beginning, about 400 people had entered the Fallen Sword Abyss. Now, there weren’t even sixty people left, and the majority of them were Spirit Stream Sect disciples.

The Pill Stream Sect forces had virtually been wiped out, having only five disciples remaining. The Profound Stream Sect only had about ten disciples left, and the Blood Stream Sect, a bit more than that.

Although the Spirit Stream Sect disciples had sustained severe casualties, after Bai Xiaochun completed his Tideflows, few died. Even those who had besieged him earlier because of the heavenstring energy only ended up getting injured, not killed. At

the moment, there were more than thirty Spirit Stream Sect disciples left.

By this point, the brutality in the Fallen Sword World could only be exceeded by the events 800 years ago with Master Limitless of the Blood Stream Sect.

Now, Bai Xiaochun was getting close to matching that event!

Rumblings filled the sky as he sped toward Song Que. As for Song Que, he was in his temporary immortal's cave, hair disheveled, hands pushed down onto his Feng Shui compass. Strands of heavenstring energy were rising up from the compass and entering his ears, nose, and mouth, to stream toward his eight spiritual seas.

Song Que knew that the heavenstring energy was not stabilized inside of him; if he were to be seriously injured, it would spill back out. The only way to stabilize it was through the passage of time, or by adding more heavenstring energy.

Furthermore, he had to absorb another portion to reach Heaven-  
Dao Foundation Establishment.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” When the last bit of heavenstring energy entered into him, he looked up, eyes radiating with madness. Some distance away, a beam of light approached, getting closer and closer until suddenly, an enormous violet cauldron appeared up above, which then shot down toward Song Que.

A deafening boom echoed out as the immortal's cave was destroyed. Howling at the top of his lungs, Song Que burst out into the air, slamming into Bai Xiaochun.

Neither of them could run from this battle. Each of them needed the portion of heavenstring energy that was contained within the other's body. As of this point, they had to call on their trump cards.

"This guy's definitely fully prepared," Bai Xiaochun thought. "I have to find an opportunity to get that heavenstring energy out of him. If the fight drags on for too long, too many things could go wrong!" Without any hesitation, he attacked with even greater speed than before.

Song Que's right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he stabbed his finger toward Bai Xiaochun. Instantly, a blood seal appeared beneath Bai Xiaochun, which then exploded upward in an attack. Simultaneously, strands of blood qi swirled out of Song Que, forming together in front of him into a blood-colored sword tip.

Bai Xiaochun performed another incantation gesture, summoning a violet cauldron, as well as projections of a dragon and a mammoth. Closing in on Song Que, he unleashed the power of his fleshly body in the form of punches and kicks that contained mountain-toppling, sea-draining power.

Both the Golden Crow Sword and his little wooden sword appeared, whistling through the air with incredible power.

He also unleashed two swords with threefold spirit enhancement designs. Sword qi raged. Black mist roiled out of the little wooden sword, and as for the Golden Crow Sword, because Bai Xiaochun was now in Foundation Establishment, the golden crow that materialized raged with flames far exceeding the previous version.

Within a few short moments, the two of them exchanged hundreds of volleys, and the fight only grew more and more brutal. Song Que had the power of eight Tideflows, so when he attacked, it resulted in terrifying, thunderous booms.

Bai Xiaochun was equally extraordinary. He had his Undying Gold Skin, and had broken through the first shackle of mortality. He had the power of nine Tideflows, which placed him on a higher level than Song Que. But he was injured, which put him in a worse position. Of course, Song Que had also been injured. Each blow struck by one would result in some heavenstring energy leaking out of the other, which would then be quickly absorbed by their opponent.

Overall, Song Que seemed to be losing more heavenstring energy. He had already lost about fifty percent of his original amount, while Bai Xiaochun had only lost thirty!

As they fought back and forth, Bai Xiaochun only continued to absorb more and more.

Divine ability after divine ability was unleashed. Although Song Que was at a disadvantage, he had a huge reserve of blood qi. Soon,

he was summoning an enormous blood sword that filled Bai Xiaochun with a sensation of deadly crisis. Furthermore, his Undying Gold Skin was starting to grow dim, as if he couldn't sustain its use for much longer.

Bai Xiaochun could already tell what Song Que was doing. He knew that he wasn't a match for Bai Xiaochun, and yet took him on anyway. That meant that, in addition to the maddened way he was fighting, he definitely had another trump card up his sleeve.

After all... Song Que was one of the most powerful Chosen from the Blood Stream Sect, a sect which shook all three other sects. Although there might be other more powerful Chosen from his sect, none of them were here now, and now that he was forced into fighting, he would definitely surpass any ordinary cultivator.

Song Que didn't seem to be in a good position. However, it was at this point that he opened his mouth and spat out a blood sphere. Bai Xiaochun had been waiting for this to happen, and immediately fell back. As he did, the blood sphere exploded, unleashing devastating force in all directions.

The sky shook, and a gale force wind ripped over the lands below. A huge, 300-meter-area was completely flattened down below, and at the same time, blood oozed out of the corners of Bai Xiaochun's mouth. Song Que also coughed up some blood, but then he took a deep breath, and his body withered visibly. That in turn restored his power levels; expression vicious, he began to advance toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Die!!” he cried, reaching back and grabbing the blood qi sword,

which he slashed viciously toward Bai Xiaochun. The sword arced through the air, making it look like a blood-colored crescent moon!

This was his trump card!

The secret magic from Middle Peak in the Blood Stream Sect, the Blood Annihilation World!

# Chapter 166: Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!

---

The Blood Annihilation World was a legacy magic from the Blood Stream Sect's Middle Peak, and could only be fully unleashed by a Foundation Establishment cultivator. However, even when Song Que was only a Qi Condensation disciple, he had still been able to use some of its might. Now that he had reached Earthstring Foundation Establishment, he was able to fully unleash it.

Even the first form was terrifying. The sword slashed down, and the beam of blood-colored sword light seemed to surpass everything around it, becoming the only thing in heaven and earth as it slashed down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Close examination would reveal that the blood sword was a stream of sword qi, bright and scintillating, seemingly capable of slicing through anything and everything. When Bai Xiaochun's little wooden sword blocked its path, it shattered into pieces. It didn't matter that the little wooden sword had a threefold spirit enhancement, completely transforming its base material; it was destroyed in an instant.

The Golden Crow Sword was of higher quality, and had also benefited from the fundamental transformation of a threefold spirit enhancement. When the blood sword hit it, it was flung off to the side.

Song Que howled, madness filling his eyes, as well as supreme self-confidence. Back in his first fight with Bai Xiaochun, he hadn't resorted to using this Inverse Blood Sword Form, mostly because



his cultivation base was insufficient. But now he could use it!

This was his most powerful trump card, and in order to ensure that it was successful, he had even used his final precious blood sphere to injure Bai Xiaochun. Only then did he resort to the Inverse Blood Sword Form.

Only then was he absolutely certain he would succeed!

“Give me that heavenstring energy or die!”

When cultivators fought, it was often important to resort to scheming and tricks. But sometimes, it wasn't necessary to put too much thought into such things. Sometimes, you just needed to find the right moment to weaken your opponent, and then unleash your most powerful attack!

Song Que was also supremely confident that his secret magic of restoration would heal his wounds in a very short time. Once he returned to his full battle prowess, he was sure that he would have no trouble seizing victory.

However, even as his sword descended, a strange look flickered through Bai Xiaochun's eyes. There was something very strange about this blood sword, and yet, there was no time to ponder the matter at the moment. Suddenly, the fading golden light that emanated from him increased in intensity as he reached his two fingers out toward Song Que's throat.

Apparently, he was willing to end the battle in mutual defeat!

Song Que's face flickered, but then twisted with vicious ferocity. Instead of evading, he sped up! The blood sword slashed down onto Bai Xiaochun's shoulder, and at the same time, Bai Xiaochun's two fingers closed in on Song Que's throat.

A cracking sound rang out. Song Que's neck suddenly turned blurry, and an afterimage appeared. As a result, Bai Xiaochun's attack hit nothing but thin air. At the same time, as Song Que's sword lashed into Bai Xiaochun's shoulder, golden light exploded up. All of the power of his Undying Gold Skin focused on fighting back against the sword. Apparently... the sword was completely neutralized. Apparently... the power of the sword couldn't match Bai Xiaochun's defensive power!

Both Song Que and Bai Xiaochun were stunned. However, neither hesitated. Both of them were aware that the other was certainly fully prepared, and as such, unleashed their follow-up techniques.

“Inverse Blood Seal!” Song Que howled. His blood qi sword collapsed, transforming into countless blood-colored sealing marks, which then flew out toward Bai Xiaochun and then exploded.

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's Throat Crushing Grasp transformed into an incantation gesture. Waving his finger at Song Que, he unleashed the might of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art. He didn't utilize Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning, nor Lightness-in-Heaviness. Instead... he used something that he had failed at over

and over again, but had never abandoned... the Human Controlling Grand Magic!

Back on the north bank, he had never been able to perfect his Human Controlling Grand Magic. He had never been able to exert full control even over the small animals; at best, he had produced some random effects on their limbs.

However, at this moment, he didn't need full control; he wanted a random effect!

As the control magic was unleashed, Song Que's arms and legs suddenly didn't seem to be coordinating with each other. He felt like someone had pushed him hard from behind, and he staggered and almost fell over. His expression flickered as he realized that his body was under the influence of something else. Furthermore, the next attack was heading, not toward his throat, but... his dantian region!

All of this takes some time to describe, but actually occurred in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Rumbling sounds filled the air as the blood seals exploded around Bai Xiaochun, causing him to cough up several mouthfuls of blood. At the same time, he unleashed the Throat Crushing Grasp in the direction of Song Que's abdomen, where his dantian region was.

Song Que was scared out of his mind. The dantian region was extremely important. Although a blow there wouldn't necessarily be fatal, it was the location of his spiritual seas, as well as the heavenstring energy. He tried to spin to the side, but Bai Xiaochun's Throat Crushing Grasp suddenly erupted with a

powerful gravitational force.

Instantly, Bai Xiaochun's right hand, backed by the power of the Throat Crushing Grasp, stabbed into Song Que's abdomen, piercing deep into the flesh and blood, all the way into the spiritual seas in his dantian.

Song Que let out an agonized shriek. If Bai Xiaochun squeezed his fingers down with the power of the Throat Crushing Grasp, then the Song Que's spiritual seas could be destroyed.

Any ordinary person in such circumstances wouldn't have the clarity of mind to defend themselves. They would be unable to escape the fate of having their spiritual seas destroyed. But Song Que... was widely regarded as the number one Chosen of the Blood Stream Sect. He was anything but ordinary!

It was a moment of profound crisis, and yet he was profoundly decisive. Therefore, he immediately flushed all of the heavenstring energy in his body directly toward his dantian region and Bai Xiaochun's right hand.

He was using the heavenstring energy as an attack! Intense power battered his dantian region, causing cracking sounds to emanate out as fractures spread out through all of his eight spiritual seas. However, at the same time, massive force exploded onto Bai Xiaochun's right hand!

Song Que was abandoning the heavenstring energy and even damaging his spiritual seas, all to shove Bai Xiaochun's hand away.

Thankfully for him, his spiritual seas weren't destroyed. Face ashen, coughing up blood, he didn't hesitate to flee at top speed.

Despite his pain and how weak he was, he produced a jade slip which he then viciously crushed. Instantly, all of the energy nodes he had linked together through the Fallen Sword World... began to crack apart!

Those cracks rapidly began to spread across the surface of the entire sword! Originally, Song Que would never have been able to do such a thing. However, the reason why the enormous sword had remained intact for so long was because of the heavenstring energy. Now that the heavenstring energy was gone, its powers were fading. The sword had already been tilted on its side, but now that the strange spell formation created by the Blood Stream Sect had been activated, the entire sword was collapsing!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered as he examined the complete strand of heavenstring energy in his hand. Without any further hesitation, he began to absorb it through his palm. As it coursed into his dantian region and combined with the previous portion of heavenstring energy, a heaven-shaking, earth-toppling energy surged out inside of him.

A Heaven-Dao aura erupted out, something profoundly holy, something that could destroy mountains and dry up seas. It filled the world, causing the scattered remnants of the disciples of the four sects to be completely and utterly shaken. Shockingly, an enormous face had appeared up in midair, in the same direction the aura was coming from.

That face... belonged to Bai Xiaochun!

“Bai Xiaochun... reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!”

Off in the distance, Song Que spit more blood out of his mouth as he sped along. When he saw what was happening, he looked up hatefully at the enormous version of Bai Xiaochun's face. Eyes bloodshot, he clenched his hands into fists so hard that his fingernails dug into his own skin. Blood started dripping down, and yet, he didn't notice.

“Bai! Xiao! CHUN!”

Even as everyone watched, shaken, filled with mixed emotions, the aura of Heaven-Dao in Bai Xiaochun's dantian region grew stronger and stronger. His nine spiritual seas were rapidly turning golden, although the process would clearly take a few days to complete. Once that happened, and they were completely gold, that would mean... that Bai Xiaochun had truly reached...

Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!!

As of this moment, his cultivation base, his latent power, his longevity, were all rising rapidly. At the same time, he could sense that something momentous was occurring within the Fallen Sword World. Even more astonishing was that, for some reason, he had the feeling that further up beyond the current sky, there was... an even more ancient heaven and earth, something profoundly primordial!

The feeling vanished only a moment later. At first, Bai Xiaochun had been on the verge of chasing after Song Que, to take advantage of his moment of weakness to kill him. But once Song Que smashed the jade slip, destroying the energy nodes, everything in the entire Fallen Sword World changed!

Intense cracking sounds rang out, as loud as claps of thunder. Huge crevices appeared, spreading out across sky and land alike. Mountains began to crumble, and plains split apart. Everything started crumbling.

The disciples present were completely shaken.

The whole world was falling apart!

“This is bad! What’s happening!?”

“Heavens! Don’t tell me the Fallen Sword World is going to collapse!?!?”

Meanwhile, outside of the Fallen Sword Abyss, Master Snakescale, Ouyang Jie, and the elders from the Profound Stream Sect and Pill Stream Sect were all sitting there cross-legged in meditation. There was still one more month left before the Holy Land was to be opened up. Suddenly, all of their faces flickered as they looked over toward the huge sword.

Already, massive cracks could be seen spreading out over its

surface!

“What happened?!”

“The fallen sword is breaking apart!!”

“Dammit, not even we can get inside!” All of them were shocked, and almost couldn’t believe that the enormous sword would really collapse!

They even tried to enter, but it was impossible.

All four of them were thinking the same thing: “Back when the sword was discovered, the patriarchs of the four sects set up teleportation formations. If the world collapses, they’ll be activated. However, we have no way of knowing if the disciples will be sent back to the sect, or somewhere else in the vicinity....”

Back in the Fallen Sword World, the ground continued to crumble. At the same time, four enormous spell formations appeared, and the power of teleportation exploded out, spreading to touch all of the disciples.

Because the disciples of the different sects cultivated different techniques, their auras were different, and as such, they were teleported out by different formations!

One by one, the disciples were enveloped by teleportation power and whisked away. Bai Xiaochun was among them. As he looked



around at the shocking catastrophe, he thought back to what Ouyang Jie had said, and did nothing to resist the power.

In the blink of an eye, his vision went dark, and the power of teleportation was pulling him away. However, at that very moment, a little hand reached out, as if to prevent him from leaving.

“Big bro, why don’t you stay and play with me...?”

Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!

# Chapter 167: Nine Serenities Ghost Domain!

---

Bai Xiaochun's scalp tingled in fear, and his eyes went wide. A pale hand reached out, belonging to a young girl in a white dress. She wore a ferocious, enigmatic smile on her face.

Her face was half covered by her long black hair, making her look even more terrifying than she might have normally. An aura of death pulsed off of her, transforming into something that looked like vipers seeking to bore into Bai Xiaochun's eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and even his pores.

However, just when the hand was about to touch him, his nine spiritual seas erupted with a Heaven-Dao aura, and the aura of death collapsed. The hissing snakes were wiped away, and the girl's hand withered, revealing dead skin and sticky, dripping blood. It was terrifying to the extreme.

The girl let out a begrudging howl that echoed out into the air.

At the same time, the teleportation power surrounding Bai Xiaochun exploded out with full force, and he vanished from the Fallen Sword World.

After all of the disciples from the four sects were gone, the Fallen Sword World continued to collapse. But then, something else happened. Massive amounts of hazy gray mist billowed out and began to fill the world. It was rife with an aura of death, and smelled like rot. Even the four powerful teleportation formations crumbled into ruins because of the rotting aura.

In the blink of an eye, the entire world... became a domain of ghosts. Howls rose up from within the mists. Apparently, all of the banesouls which had existed in the world were now beginning to awaken.

Strangely, the huge sword stopped crumbling!

In the outside world, Ouyang Jie and the others saw the sword cease crumbling, and watched as black mist begin to pulse out of it. They exchanged dismayed glances. However, a moment later, they tried once again to enter the sword, and this time had no problem doing so.

As they entered, they could still sense a fading holy aura.

“That aura....”

“Heavenstring energy!!! That’s heavenstring energy!!” Even as their faces flickered with shock, the sinister voice of a young girl rose up from the mists below.... It sounded bizarre and cruel, and filled the entire world.

“The heavenstring energy hath been harvested by your disciples. Henceforth, this place shall be called... the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain. In the future, do not set foot in this place. Any who violate this prescript will have their entire sect exterminated!”

As soon as the voice rang out, Ouyang Jie and the others coughed

up mouthfuls of blood. The voice crashed in their ears like thunder as they were forcefully ejected from the world.

“Banespirit!!” they cried in alarm. The pressure they felt was something that exceeded the Nascent Soul stage. Trembling, hearts battered by waves of shock, they retreated at full speed, simultaneously sending word back to their sects.

“The Fallen Sword World has been transformed into the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain. Furthermore... one of the banesouls awakened and became a banespirit!!”

“The heavenstring energy was taken away? Who? Which disciple of which sect got it? Does that mean... someone reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!?!?”

Even as they fled, the former Fallen Sword World, which was now the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain, filled up with mist. Standing in the mist was a girl in a white dress, holding a skinless, shrunken version of Lei Shan. At first she was looking up into the sky, but then she lowered her eyes to gaze at the tens of thousands of banesouls in the area. All of them... were prostrating themselves to her!

Not a single sound could be heard.

As for Lei Shan, his eyes were filled with incredible terror and pain.

Standing next to the girl in the white dress was a pretty young woman with expressionless eyes, a puppet. She was none other than... Gongsun Wan'er.

There was no poison upon her any more, nor any centipedes. The human-faced spider had transformed into mist and vanished. She was now completely clean and empty, inside and out....

“Aw, you don't want to stay and play with me, big bro...?” the girl said, her voice sinister and bizarre. “Well, that's fine. I'll be able to leave this place soon, then I can come find you. I'll show you how pretty this new dress of mine is.” The girl chuckled and looked over at Gongsun Wan'er.

The fact that the Fallen Sword World had been transformed into the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain was a major event in the eastern Lower Reaches of the cultivation world. What had once been a Foundation Establishment Holy Land was now a domain of terror!

Furthermore, one of the banesouls had awakened and turned into a terrifying, sentient banespirit. Even the elders of the four sects were left jumpy at the thought of it.

However, there was nothing that could be done about the matter. Although the matter would influence the four sects to some degree, it wasn't a huge loss. Furthermore, it was a joint loss to all four sects. What was most astonishing of all was the information confirmed by the voice of the girl... the heavenstring energy had been taken.

That meant someone must have reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment.

“Who was it.... Which sect and which disciple got the heavenstring energy!?”

“Dammit! If it was one of the other three sects, that means they’ll have a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment disciple. We need to kill that person when they’re weak. If they reach Core Formation, they’ll be a force not easily stopped!”

“It was definitely our Blood Stream Sect. Hahaha! Now we have both Patriarch Limitless... and another top-level cultivator!”

The four elders immediately used transmission jade slips to get the information back to their sects as quickly as possible.

At the same time, they tried to make contact with the disciples who had been teleported out of the Fallen Sword World. Unfortunately, they soon found that the fluctuations caused by the teleportation made communication impossible.

Soon, the Blood Stream Sect, Profound Stream Sect, Spirit Stream Sect and Pill Stream Sect were sent a huge commotion. Even the patriarchs of the sect were shaken. Large numbers of Foundation Establishment Dharma protectors and elders were dispatched. Even prime elders were sent out. No effort was spared to track down the disciples who had been teleported out to random locations.

All they had to do was find one disciple, and they should be able to get information about what had occurred in the Fallen Sword World. Most importantly, everyone wanted to know... who got the heavenstring energy!

In the Spirit Stream Sect, the founding patriarch personally passed down orders which sent countless Inner Sect disciples and Foundation Establishment elders into action. Even Outer Sect disciple were called upon. They flew out from both the south bank and the north bank, spreading out with one mission: find the disciples who had been teleported out of the Fallen Sword Abyss.

As soon as a single one was located, they were to report back to the sect immediately.

The first person to be located was not one of the numerous disciples from the Spirit Stream Sect, but rather, one of the five remaining Pill Stream Sect disciples!

The Pill Stream Sect had sent 80 disciples into the Fallen Sword World, and more than ninety percent of them had been killed. Luckily for the Pill Stream Sect, one of the five disciples who made it out alive happened to be teleported to a location just outside of the Pill Stream Sect itself.

When the Pill Stream Sect elders and sect leader arrived, they found an extremely weak disciple, his energy almost completely drained. Fellow disciples immediately supported him, pouring their own spiritual power into him so that he could speak. Trembling, eyes flickering with fear, he weakly explained, "Dead. They're all dead. Eldest Brother Fang Lin was killed. Zhao Rou is

also dead. All of them were exterminated by Bai Xiaochun from the Spirit Stream Sect!!

“Bai Xiaochun... completed nine Tideflows. He and Song Que fought over the heavenstring energy, and... he reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!!”

The disciples’ words left the Pill Stream Sect cultivators, and even the elders and the sect leader, completely shaken. Gasps could be heard, and eyes went wide with disbelief.

“Heaven-Dao... Foundation Establishment!?”

“Bai Xiaochun? Spirit Stream Sect?!”

The sect leader’s eyes flickered, and he grimly said, “Immediately send word to all of our spies in the Spirit Stream Sect. Tell them to find Bai Xiaochun and kill him. Spare no effort whatsoever!!”



## Chapter 168: Incognito....

---

The Pill Stream Sect ordered all of their spies into action, hoping to be the first to find Bai Xiaochun. If they did, they would spare no cost whatsoever to kill him. As for the other three sects, they mobilized large forces to search for the disciples who were currently missing.

As all that was happening, something else occurred on the Eastwood Continent, in a jungle-covered mountain range not too far from Eastwood City. Next to one particularly large tree, the air rippled with teleportation fluctuations, and then Bai Xiaochun appeared, staggering out at a near run.

As soon as he was out in the open, he leaned over and vomited noisily.

“What kind of teleportation was that supposed to be!? Nearly lost my poor little life in the process....” Bai Xiaochun’s face was ashen, and he was panting. What he didn’t know was that past teleportations he had experienced had been performed with weakened teleportation power in order to make them as comfortable as possible. In contrast, the teleportation which had pulled him out of the Fallen Sword Abyss was fully powered. All of the portals set up by the four sects were like that. In a moment of grave crisis, the most important thing was to teleport the targets out as quickly as possible.

A forcible teleportation like that would actually knock most people unconscious.

After emptying his stomach, Bai Xiaochun felt a bit better, although he was still so dizzy that he was seeing stars. Leaning up against the tree, he looked around and realized he had no idea where he was. From what Elder Ouyang Jie had explained, he knew that he could be just about anywhere.

“I should be back on the Eastwood Continent though,” he thought, massaging his temples. Then he recalled the little hand and the strange voice he had heard just before being teleported away, and his heart filled with fear. Trembling, he resolved to never, ever go back to the Fallen Sword Abyss.

Still trying to catch his breath, he sat down on a nearby log and looked down at his tattered garments. By this point, they were so damaged and blood-stained it wasn't even possible to identify them as the robes of the Spirit Stream Sect. He wanted to change them, but unfortunately, didn't have a spare set in his bag of holding.

“The Fallen Sword Abyss was so brutal....” As he thought back to everything that had occurred, his scalp began to tingle. What was especially frightening was how everyone had almost gone insane in their desire to kill him. And then there was the vicious, savage battle with Song Que. In the end, he sighed.

“Why do cultivators always end up fighting and killing...?” Sighing, he probed his cultivation base, and found that his roiling spiritual seas were gradually turning golden. By this point, the process was about thirty percent complete.

“Hahaha! Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!” In his excitement, he forgot about the brutality of the Fallen Sword

World. The idea of 500 years of longevity caused his eyes to shine. Flicking his sleeve and sticking his chin up, he proudly said, “I, Bai Xiaochun, am truly a consummate Chosen. Hahaha! Hahahahaha!” After laughing loudly for a while, he cleared his throat. “I guess I should probably go figure out where I am.”

Something else he found interesting was that although his cultivation base was getting stronger and stronger, the aura it emitted was getting weaker and weaker. It was almost as if, because his spiritual seas were climbing to the Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment level, all of the pressure and energy they would normally radiate was now focusing inward.

At the moment, anyone who sensed his aura would place him at the ninth level of Qi Condensation. As the process continued, he had the feeling that his cultivation base aura would eventually disappear altogether, and he would seem like a mortal. Only when the process was complete would he experience a heaven-rending, earth-crushing explosion of power.

“It should be finished in two days or so,” he thought excitedly. With that, he put the matters of his cultivation base aside. Next, he produced a jade slip to try to transmit a message to the sect. Unfortunately, the jade slip had been damaged during the teleportation process. Although the teleportation energy had already faded away, it seemed that he would temporarily be unable to make contact with the sect.

Feeling a bit annoyed, he put the jade slip away and then transformed into a beam of light that shot up into the sky and then off into the distance.

It didn't take long for him to realize that with his current cultivation base power, he could fly much more quickly than before. He was soon out of the mountain range, whereupon he caught sight of an enormous city off in the distance.

The city walls were very imposing, and were constructed from greenish-colored bricks. Furthermore, each and every brick seemed to be inscribed with magical symbols that formed a spell formation.

The spell formation sent light streaming up high into the sky, seemingly connecting the city to the heavens themselves. A huge green vortex could be seen up above, with lightning occasionally dancing back and forth within it.

There was also pressure weighing down which restricted the cultivation bases of any cultivators that entered the city, making it impossible for them to fly.

The city was huge, enough to house at least 10,000,000 people, and had four main gates which were constantly packed with floods of people going in and out.

In front of each of the city gates were enormous stone steles, inscribed with calligraphy as flamboyant as dancing dragons and swirling phoenixes.

"Eastwood City!" Bai Xiaochun gaped in shock for a moment, and then his eyes lit up.

This was the biggest city in the territory controlled by the Spirit Stream Sect.

It was actually considered part of the Spirit Stream Sect, and was operated by the ten most powerful cultivator clans on the Eastwood Continent. It had a history stretching back 10,000 years, and was home to not only hosts of cultivators, but mortals as well.

In addition to the ten great cultivator clans, there was also a disciple of the Spirit Stream Sect stationed there as an official emissary, responsible for keeping the peace among the clans.

That was the exact position Du Lingfei had been sent here years ago to fill. Although she only had a Qi Condensation cultivation base, she represented the Foundation Establishment elder who was also stationed there. The elder rarely made public appearances, leaving most of the duties to Du Lingfei to handle.

Her primary task was to keep the ten great clans in check.

“Elder Sister Du was sent here a while back as an emissary. I haven’t seen her in such a long time....” Bai Xiaochun’s heart warmed at the thought of Du Lingfei, and he couldn’t help but picture her looking shy and angry at the same time. “Hm. I can’t just walk straight in. I’ll sneak in incognito and check things out first. After all these years, I wonder if [my boo](#) stepped out on me and found another man.” Eyebrow cocked craftily, he shot through the air toward Eastwood City.

In Chinese, Bai Xiaochun gives Du Lingfei a nickname that is a

play on words based on her surname. It actually sounds very cute in Chinese, the type of nickname that you would give to your lover/wife. I'm using "boo" since it rhymes with "Du" and is also a cutesy nickname

As he neared, he could sense that flying was restricted.

"How annoying! I'm a Prestige disciple! I'm the Junior Brother of the sect leader. Eastwood City belongs to the Spirit Stream Sect, so therefore, it's mine by right! I can't believe I'm not allowed to fly!" Grumbling all the way, he landed on the ground and headed toward the city gate. There was quite a line, and he didn't feel right cutting in front, so he went to the back. Before long, he worked his way up to the gate itself, where he paid a small spirit stone tax to enter.

No one paid much attention to him. All they cared about was the spirit stones. Apparently, they were confident that no one would cause any trouble.

"Eastwood City is so big! I can't believe they still charge a spirit stone tax to get in!" Bai Xiaochun was not very pleased about what was happening. Considering his status, it was really a loss of face. Coughing dryly, he clasped his hands behind his back and strutted through the gate.

Once inside, the sight of the countless towering buildings caused him to gasp.

Everything was huge! The roads were paved with limestone,

every slab of which emanated spiritual energy. The buildings were decorated with gold and jade, carved with dragons and phoenixes, and were completely extraordinary to behold.

Everything was festooned with beautiful pearls and spirit stones. The glow of magic rose up everywhere, creating an air of luxury that almost physically buffeted Bai Xiaochun in the face.

“This... this place....” He swallowed as he took in the beauty and luxury. Vehicles trundled back and forth in the streets, and people could be seen everywhere. He almost felt like he was in a different world.

As for the residents of the city, they dressed in silks and satins, and looked very impressive as they walked to and fro. Regardless of the level of their cultivation base, they seemed very proud and lofty. Unlike the mortals in smaller cities and villages, the mortals here didn’t seem scared or impressed at all by the cultivators around them.

As he walked along, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but gasp in shock at all the things he was seeing. After all, he had been raised in a village, and after that, spent all his time in the sect. He had never been to a big city like this before.

Of course, considering how he was looking around, he stuck out from the crowd, and the passing cultivators looked over with disdainful expressions, taking him to be a country bumpkin. Some of them noticed how his clothing was ripped and torn, and even stained with blood. Realizing that he was probably someone that shouldn’t be provoked, they quickly got out of his way.

“I never could have imagined how incredible this place is!” The more he saw, the more excited he got. The sheer luxury of the place caused him to sigh, and he was already trying to figure out how to get the sect to transfer him here.

Continuing to sigh, he passed one certain shop, and was suddenly riveted in place. It was a clothing shop, filled with garments of every color and style possible, all of them beautifully tailored and embroidered. Even the lowest quality garments were amazingly crafted.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but muse that the clothing here was far, far better looking than anything from back in the sect. Eyes shining, he walked into the shop.

There were a few people inside, browsing through the selection of clothing. As soon as Bai Xiaochun entered, a couple of them looked over, and when they saw his dilapidated robes, looks of derision appeared on their faces. However, they could sense the aura of the seventh level of Qi Condensation on him, so they quickly looked away.

There was one young man, dressed in luxurious garments, whose eyes went wide as soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun. For a brief moment, a strange gleam could be seen in his eyes before he averted his gaze.

Meanwhile, a smiling salesperson approached Bai Xiaochun and began to show him around.



“This heavenly dragon robe is made from heavenwater anaconda skin. After being cured with eighty-one types of medicinal plants, it was decorated by a grandmaster of embroidery. There’s a spell formation hidden inside that provides resistance against all water-type magical techniques!

“Oh, that thousand leaves coat is crafted from a thousand different types of spirit leaves. A secret magic was used to tailor it, and when you wear it, you’ll be surrounded by the fragrance of plants and vegetation. After wearing it for some time, you’ll naturally exude the fragrance of spirit medicine.

“Oh, this piece....”

Bai Xiaochun nodded, feeling a garment here and there, falling in love with everything he looked at. At the same time, the young man in the luxurious garments finally looked up. Smiling, he walked over to Bai Xiaochun, clasped hands and bowed.

“Salutations, Brother.”

# Chapter 169: Hou Yunqing Never Lies

---

Surprised, Bai Xiaochun turned to look at the young man.

“I am your humble servant, Hou Yunqing,” the young man said politely, a broad smile covering his face. “I happen to be the owner of this little shop. Brother, I can see that you’re an extraordinary person, a dragon amongst men. If you see something you like, Brother, just take it, on the house. Think of it as a gift between friends.”

“Are you serious?!” Bai Xiaochun looked at Hou Yunqing, blinking.

“Of course I’m serious! Hou Yunqing never lies.”

Bai Xiaochun responded with a sarcastic chuckle. Having no reason to refuse a free gift, he casually pointed at the heavenly dragon robe.

The salesperson looked at Hou Yunqing, who smiled and nodded. The salesperson shrugged in disbelief as he handed the heavenly dragon robe over to Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun threw it on, and immediately looked completely different than before.

Hou Yunqing laughed heartily and said, “Brother, the heavenly dragon robe definitely suits you perfectly. It almost looks as if it was custom tailored just for you! You really know how to pick clothes for yourself!”

“You think so too?” Bai Xiaochun replied, smoothing out the robe. He was very pleased, and couldn’t help but think that the clothes they wore back at the sect were far too shabby. He had already fallen in love with this new world of luxury and sensual pleasure.

Hou Yunqing was so taken aback by Bai Xiaochun’s response that he didn’t know what to say next. Finally, he cleared his throat and changed the subject.

“Brother, there’s a banquet tonight here in Eastwood City. Emissary Du Lingfei from the Spirit Stream Sect has reached the end of her commission and will be returning to her sect, so a big banquet is being held in her honor. If you don’t have anything else to do, Brother, why don’t you come along? It’ll be a lot of fun.”

Bai Xiaochun looked at Hou Yunqing with an enigmatic smile for a moment and then voiced his agreement.

Hou Yunqing knew that he was being a bit presumptuous, but also wanted to take advantage of the golden opportunity which had presented itself, and didn’t have time to come up with any better tactics. Smiling, he led Bai Xiaochun out of the shop and onto the street.

As soon as they stepped out, Bai Xiaochun noticed that they were being followed by eight bodyguards, all of whom were in the fifth level of Qi Condensation. They were rogue cultivators, but they clearly were adept killers, as they radiated powerful murderous

auras.

Hou Yunqing looked at Bai Xiaochun out of the corner of his eye and said, “You know, Emissary Du Lingfei from the Spirit Stream Sect is as beautiful as an immortal. Not only is her cultivation base very high, she’s spectacularly good-looking. In fact, she’s one of the top ten goddesses in the Eastwood Continent. With her as emissary here, the ten clans maintained completely harmonious relations. Not a single problem ever cropped up. She handled her duties with great finesse.”

This was Bai Xiaochun’s first time hearing about Du Lingfei’s affairs in Eastwood City, and he was immediately intrigued. “She sounds incredible!”

“Oh, she’s incredible, alright. Very incredible! Famous young men from cultivator clans all over the Eastwood Continent have tried to earn her favor. In my opinion, though, there isn’t a single clan that’s worthy of her. Only few people in the Spirit Stream Sect itself could be counted deserving. To be honest, there’s really only one person good enough for her!” Hou Yunqing sighed.

“Who’s that?!” Bai Xiaochun asked, blinking.

“Oh, he’s a rare Chosen in the Spirit Stream Sect, the type that only comes along once every 10,000 years. He’s a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. His name has rocked both the north and south banks of the Spirit Stream Sect, and he’s popular among countless disciples. His name is... Bai Xiaochun!” Hou Yunqing’s expression was one of reverence, although he seemed to be working hard to suppress his zeal. As for the

bodyguards, they all had strange expressions on their faces. They had worked for Hou Yunqing for many years, but this was their first time hearing him speak like this. They couldn't help but look over at Bai Xiaochun, curiosity gnawing at their hearts.

Bai Xiaochun coughed dryly. Looking very thoughtful, he said, "You're right, Bai Xiaochun truly is extraordinary."

Then he gave Hou Yunqing another enigmatic smile.

Either Hou Yunqing didn't notice Bai Xiaochun's thoughtful look, or he did notice and pretended not to.

"Extraordinary?" he continued excitedly. "He's more than that. He's a true Chosen, a superstar, the type of person all the female disciples in the Spirit Stream Sect want as a Daoist partner. As for the male disciples, they all want to be his friend. He's the jewel of the Spirit Stream Sect. I've even heard some people say that after coming back from the Foundation Establishment Holy Lands, he's reached Earthstring Foundation Establishment."

"A person like that is like a full moon on a dark night. All people can do is look up at him in amazement. What a pity that my own latent talent is just average. Otherwise, I'd go looking for him myself and offer to be his follower for life, to be at his beck and call at all hours of the day."

Bai Xiaochun was almost blushing by this point. However, Hou Yunqing seemed really caught up in his excitement, and Bai Xiaochun didn't want to interrupt him. Therefore, he allowed him

to keep speaking in this vein for quite some time, even giving him an encouraging look now and then.

Hou Yunqing kept it up all the way to the banquet, coming up with new and flowery ways to praise Bai Xiaochun the entire time. At one point, he ran out of things to say, but Bai Xiaochun gave him an encouraging look, and he gritted his teeth and racked his brains to come up with more. The nonstop talking was rather exhausting....

As Bai Xiaochun and Hou Yunqing were heading toward the banquet, large numbers of disciples and elders from the Spirit Stream Sect were out scouring the Eastwood Continent. Their main goal was to track down the disciples who had been teleported out of the Fallen Sword Abyss, and find out what exactly had occurred.

A group of Inner Sect disciples was making their way along the edge of a jungle when they happened to find a disciple who had been knocked unconscious during the teleportation process. They quickly revived him.

The first words that came out of his mouth were enough to shock all of the rescuers.

“Sect Uncle Bai Xiaochun reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!!”

The words struck the hearts of the listeners like bolts of lightning. All of them gasped. It was earth-shattering news, so

without the slightest hesitation, they sent messages back to the sect.

Soon, more and more disciples who had been teleported out of the Fallen Sword Abyss turned up. Furthermore, the news that was getting sent back to the sect was all the same.

Bai Xiaochun had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!

He had struck despair into the hearts of the disciples of the other three sects. He had slaughtered Zhao Rou and Fang Lin of the Pill Stream Sect, had seriously injured Nine-Isles, had successfully wrested all the heavenstring energy from Song Que, and had risen to Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!

Some people were even saying that he had killed Lei Shan from the Profound Stream Sect.

As the information trickled back, the Spirit Stream Sect was thrown into a huge commotion. The elders, the seven peak lords, the sect leader... all of them were both stunned and, at the same time, wildly elated. Earlier, they had been nervous, unsure of which disciple from which sect had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment. In fact, many had been convinced that it would be someone from the Blood Stream Sect.

Word had even been sent to the spies in the Blood Stream Sect to try to kill certain disciples there.

But now, everyone was shaken to find that the person who had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment... actually came from the Spirit Stream Sect. And it was... Bai Xiaochun!

Li Qinghou and the sect leader were beside themselves with joy. The prime elders were completely shaken. Next, the entire sect was mobilized, with one mission.

“Find Bai Xiaochun. Immediately send word back to the sect if you do. Protect him and escort him home!”

At the same time, the Spirit Stream Sect locked down all disciples who were suspected of being spies. They were well aware that once the other three sects got word of what had occurred, they would do anything to try to kill Bai Xiaochun!

The cultivator clans in the area were closely connected to the Spirit Stream Sect, and as such, it was essentially impossible to keep word from spreading. Soon, everyone had caught wind of what was going on. The patriarchs of the various clans were completely shaken. Eyes bloodshot, they sent the members of their clans out in all directions to try to find Bai Xiaochun.

After all, they knew that he could have been teleported anywhere on the Eastwood Continent.

If they got lucky and he was teleported into their territory, and they found him first, they would be able to invite him to visit their clan personally. That would be a huge honor in and of itself, considering he was a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment



cultivator now.

There would also be the possibility of some of their clan members striking up friendships with him, which would also be of enormous benefit to the clan.

Even more enticing than that, though, was the possibility that Bai Xiaochun might take a liking to one of the female clan members, and take her as a Daoist partner. If that happened, not even the sect leader would be able to do anything about it.

“Dispatch everyone. Find him! Bai Xiaochun might have been teleported into our territory!”

As the cultivator clans were dispatching people to search, Bai Xiaochun and Hou Yunqing finally arrived at the banquet.

It was being hosted in a sprawling mansion that covered over ten acres of land. The walls were magnificently decorated, and the grounds were filled with pine trees and decorative rock formations. In one area near the center, pavilions had been set up, as well as a three-story pagoda that looked almost like a palace. Decorated with dragons and phoenixes, it was tasteful and elegant, yet clearly wildly expensive.

A din of voices could be heard, and servants bustled back and forth carrying all sorts of fine liquor and fresh fruit to the elegantly attired guests.

There were well over a hundred guests present, men and women, young and old. Some sat alone, others in groups of three to five.

Guards were posted at the main entrance, where a valet cheerfully greeted the new arrivals. For those he didn't recognize, he would accept their invitation cards, make a record of their arrival, and then show them inside.

As soon as Hou Yunqing appeared, the valet greeted him respectfully and escorted him inside. Bai Xiaochun walked along by his side, looking around curiously at the banquet. This was his first time attending such an affair.

One of the first things he saw was a muscular man off in the distance, chatting and laughing with a pretty young woman as they all walked along toward Hou Yunqing. The man wore a long violet robe that was clearly very expensive. His face had a healthy glow to it, and he wore rings of holding on all of his fingers. Seven or eight jade pendants could be seen on his person, and he looked every bit like a rich playboy.

## Chapter 170: Goddess Lingfei

---

The young woman wore makeup that made her seem young and pure. However, there was something about her that made it obvious she was a paid courtesan, which lessened her appeal. Overall, though, she was quite beautiful.

Smiling, the burly man hurried over to lead Hou Yunqing to a nearby table. “Brother Yunqing, I’ve been waiting for you. Come, come. Have a seat with me.”

Only when Hou Yunqing gave an apologetic look to Bai Xiaochun did the burly man finally notice him.

“You must be new around here,” he said with a smile. “But you’re a guest nonetheless. Any friend of Yunqing’s is a friend of mine. I’m Li Youdao. This banquet is being held by my Li Clan in honor of Emissary Lingfei. It was a bit rushed, so things aren’t as well planned out as they should have been. Please, forgive me for any inadequacies.” Looking very pleased with himself, he pulled Hou Yunqing and Bai Xiaochun over to the tables, where they all sat down. The young woman sat down quietly next to Li Youdao, looking very lovely and demure.

“Things really were far too rushed,” Li Youdao said. “The only beverage I could get my hands on was this spirit alcohol brewed from tier-1 high-grade spirit medicine. If I’d had more time, I could definitely have procured some product made from tier-2 high-grade spirit medicine.” He sighed, and yet, it was impossible for him to cover up the look of pride on his face. He and Hou Yunqing had been secretly competing with each other for years, and at long

last he had this chance to put him in his place.

It was at this point that the young woman sitting next to Li Youdao spoke up.

“Youdao,” she said flirtatiously, “don’t be so modest! It would be hard to find another clan in the Eastwood Continent that would entertain so many people with spirit alcohol brewed from tier-1 high-grade spirit medicine. Even a small glass could be sold for several hundred spirit stones!”

Her flattery was like music to Li Youdao’s ears.

“Ah, what are a few hundred spirit stones?” he said. “It’s just spirit alcohol. Come, come, Yunqing. You and your friend have to try this stuff. It’s really hard to find it anywhere in Eastwood City.” With that, he waved a servant over to fill glasses for Hou Yunqing and Bai Xiaochun.

Hou Yunqing looked a bit embarrassed. Despite the fact that his clan was quite well-off, he had only ever once tried spirit alcohol brewed from tier-1 high-grade spirit medicine. After hesitating for a moment, he smiled wryly and took a sip.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the alcohol curiously. After sniffing it, he couldn’t help but be disappointed; clearly, the impurity levels were quite high.

Li Youdao seemed very satisfied to see Hou Yunqing’s reaction,

but when he saw the expression on Bai Xiaochun's face, he was less than pleased. After looking him up and down, he decided that, not only would he put Hou Yunqing in his place, he would crush his friend at the same time.

“Brother, are you not satisfied? Ah, don't worry. This banquet we're throwing for Goddess Lingfei is a bit rushed, but we still managed to get some rare foods to serve. I've heard that Goddess Lingfei always talks about how much she misses the Spirit Stream Sect. Therefore, the Li Clan has spent a lot of money to get some spirit tail chickens to remind her of her home.

“Men! Serve the spirit tail chicken!” Laughing heartily, he waved his hand, and a servant rushed over carrying a golden platter. There on the platter was a fully roasted spirit tail chicken!

The platter itself looked quite expensive, and as for the three-colored spirit tails, they were arranged very artistically. The chicken had been roasted to a deep amber color, and looked extraordinary. Apparently, it had just come out of the oven, causing a wonderful aroma to fill the area. Quite a few other guests looked over in shock.

“A spirit tail chicken!? Wow, the Li Clan is so rich!”

“Every table gets a spirit tail chicken? Look, those clearly weren't raised around here. Where did they come from!?”

Hearing the reactions of those sitting in the area, Bai Xiaochun blinked in surprise. “Isn't that just a spirit tail chicken?”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the beautiful young woman sitting next to Li Youdao scornfully said, “Prince Yunqing, your friend here really knows how to run his mouth. Isn’t that just a spirit tail chicken? It makes it seem like he’s eaten a lot of them.”

Li Youdao looked gravely at the young woman, as if he didn’t approve of her tone. However, the truth was that he also felt that Bai Xiaochun was trying to be a big showoff. Inwardly, he was starting to get irritated, but outwardly, he made a polite explanation.

“Friend, I’m afraid you don’t understand. These spirit tail chickens aren’t ordinary in any way. They weren’t raised by my Li Clan, they’re from the Spirit Stream Sect!

“More specifically, they’re from the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect!” Even though his words were spoken softly, many people in the area heard them, and soon, gasps rang out.

Even Hou Yunqing couldn’t hold back from gasping at Li Youdao’s display of wealth.

Li Youdao was very pleased at the reaction he was getting from Hou Yunqing and the crowd. Looking very proud of himself, he continued to offer further explanation.

“The spirit tail chickens from the south bank of the Spirit Stream Sect were rare enough to begin with. However, a few years ago, a bandit known as the Chicken-Thieving Fiend caused a sharp

decline in production. Nowadays, spirit tail chickens from the south bank can only be acquired at auction, and for an extraordinary price at that. They're very easy to identify. They have green bones and beautiful tail feathers. They look completely different from other types of chickens.

“However,” he lamented, “thanks to that despicable Chicken-Thieving Fiend and his demented crime spree, the south bank spirit tail chickens nearly went extinct!” With that, he proceeded to curse and revile the Chicken-Thieving Fiend. His female companion joined in, until all of the surrounding guests were echoing their sentiments.

In response to everyone rebuking the Chicken-Thieving Fiend, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat awkwardly.

It was at this point that a new group of people arrived, a group of handsome elite clan members from the cultivator clans, who were clustered around a young woman. She wore a long white gown that resembled a blooming lotus, had the fairest of skin, and had her long hair coiled up and bound with a silver hairpin. She wore pearls and jewelry, and walked with a gentle grace. The starlight which reflected in her eyes made her look even more beautiful.

Unfortunately, her exquisite beauty was somewhat marred because of her furrowed brow; apparently she was concerned with some important matter. And yet, she did her best to put a smile on her face as she conversed in a low tone with one of the young men escorting her.

Although the young man did his best to conceal it, it was possible

to see the passion in his eyes as he listened to her.

That young woman was none other than Du Lingfei.

She immediately became the focus of all attention. Furthermore, there was something about her, some energy or power that made everyone in her presence feel the urge to bow their heads.

Despite how many people were clustered around her, Bai Xiaochun instantly caught sight of her. At first, he almost looked like he was in a daze. They hadn't seen each other for years, but she somehow seemed more familiar to him than ever. And yet, she was more beautiful than before. There was also something a bit more noble about her, perhaps something that had come from holding a position of power for so long.

She definitely seemed different from the rude and unreasonable beauty she had been when they'd first met. And yet, as the moments ticked by, that old version of Du Lingfei and this newer, more beautiful one slowly merged together.

Bai Xiaochun had grown in their time apart, and so had she. Thanks to her subtle control of affairs in Eastwood City, the cultivator clans were in harmony, something that most outsiders found unbelievable.

"Goddess Lingfei...." Li Youdao said, his eyes flickering with infatuation. Back when he'd first laid eyes on her, he had been somewhat attracted to her. However, it was only thanks to her deft manipulation of the cultivator clans that he came to be fully



infatuated.

The courtesan sitting next to him paled in comparison, and she clearly knew that. In the face of the powerful Du Lingfei, she had no choice other than to lower her head.

At this point, Hou Yunqing leaned over to Bai Xiaochun and quietly said, “Goddess Lingfei came to Eastwood City with nothing. I remember her often gazing back in the direction of the Spirit Stream Sect, thinking about something. Who would have ever thought that she would do so well for herself? None of the past emissaries ever accomplished what she has. She kept the peace between the clans, bringing about a harmony the likes of which has never been seen before.

“Supposedly, some of the clan patriarchs were so impressed that they convinced the Spirit Stream Sect to renew her emissary commission several times over.”

Even as Li Youdao stared at her with glittering eyes, and Hou Yunqing was murmuring to Bai Xiaochun, Du Lingfei finished speaking to the young man next to her. Just as she was about to take a step forward, her gaze pierced through the crowd to land on Li Youdao’s table.

Her eyes went wide, and a tremor of disbelief ran through her. All of a sudden, it seemed as if everyone around her had vanished, leaving only one person behind in her world.

Breathing heavily, she started walking in the direction of the

table. Everyone was shocked to see her acting this way, especially Li Youdao, who shot to his feet, trembling.

“Sh-she’s actually coming over to see me!!!” His mind began to spin, and his heart began to pump wildly. Unable to prevent the joy from filling his face, he immediately began to walk toward her.

“Goddess Lingfei....” he said. Even as he prepared more words to say, Du Lingfei walked right by without even sparing him a passing glance. His jaw dropped, and he looked stiffly over his shoulder to see Du Lingfei stop in front of the table and look at one person in particular.

“Bai Xiaochun, you’re here....” Even the way she stood there was enticing. Her eyes were beautiful, like shining moons, and everyone who looked at her couldn’t prevent their hearts from surging with passion.

The instant she spoke Bai Xiaochun’s name, the clamor of the banquet transformed into utter silence. Trembling, people began to turn to look at Bai Xiaochun.

Everyone knew that Bai Xiaochun was a Prestige disciple of the Spirit Stream Sect and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. The latest news was that he had recently gone to one of the Foundation Establishment Holy Lands.

“Yeah, I’m here,” he said, smiling. All of a sudden, he recalled that moment in the cave when they were fleeing from the Luochen, how she had sat next to the fire, her face ashen and yet

oh so beautiful.

Hou Yunqing plastered a look of surprise on his face. Taking several dramatic steps backward, and stumbling down to his knees in the process, he pointed his finger and raised his voice as loud as possible. “Y-y-you’re... you’re Bai Xiaochun!?!?”

It was at that exact same moment that people from the various cultivator clans began to pull jade slips out of their holding items, as news came in from their clans.

Within moments, the surprise which had just gripped their heart turned into massive waves of shock. People began to gasp and look over at Bai Xiaochun, their minds reeling.

All of the various jade slips contained similar information.

“Bai Xiaochun reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment! Any clan member who meets him should treat him with utter respect. Immediately notify the clan for a hefty reward!!”

## Chapter 171: Assassinate Bai Xiaochun!

---

Bai Xiaochun looked around at the flabbergasted crowd of cultivator clan members, and mused about how glorious the situation was. From the expression of utter shock on Hou Yunqing's face, it seemed as if he had only just now realized the shocking identity of the person he had befriended. Although Bai Xiaochun found his behavior a bit servile, it still felt good receive such treatment.

Coughing dryly, he patted Hou Yunqing on the shoulder and said, "Alright, enough with the act. Your big bro Hou Yunfei told me about you a while ago."

Hou Yunqing rose to his feet, looking a bit embarrassed. The truth was that because of his place in the Hou Clan, he had recognized Bai Xiaochun the instant he set foot in his shop. The Hou Clan had long since passed out information throughout the clan about Bai Xiaochun.

Hou Yunqing knew that his clan brother and sister were both on good terms with Bai Xiaochun, and he himself had hoped to somehow make friends with him, but had never been able to. When the chance suddenly arose to get close to an important person like Bai Xiaochun, he had to strike while the iron was hot. Of course, when flattering someone, the best thing was not to be too direct. That way, the target of the flattery would feel more comfortable, as would the flatterer.

And that was why things had played out the way they did on the way to the banquet.... Actually, Hou Yunqing had been prepared

for the possibility that Bai Xiaochun would see through his ruse. In fact, Bai Xiaochun's enigmatic smiles along the way caused Hou Yunqing to come to that very conclusion. However, that didn't prevent him from continuing to lay on the flattery as thick as possible.

Bai Xiaochun looked at Du Lingfei, and she looked back at him. However, there was no time to sit around and reminisce. People from the cultivator clans immediately began to flock around Bai Xiaochun, offering formal greetings in extremely respectful tones, each one more enthusiastic than the one before.

When Du Lingfei saw so many people jumping at the chance to meet Bai Xiaochun, and how he stood there proudly with his hands clasped behind his back, she couldn't help but smile and think back to everything that had happened when they were being chased by the Luo Chen Clan.

Mixed emotions soon swirled within her eyes, and she sighed. However, even in the middle of her sigh, her expression suddenly flickered, and she walked over to stand next to Bai Xiaochun.

The moment she stepped forward, Bai Xiaochun sensed something, and looked up. There in the air not too far away, three beams of light were approaching at breakneck speed.

Three cultivators came into view, two men and a woman. All of them were bursting with killing intent, and shockingly, all of them were Foundation Establishment cultivators.

“Prepare to die, Bai Xiaochun!” As they closed in on the area, they fell into a triangular formation, and then unleashed a powerful attack that not only erupted with extermination power, but also contained a noxious black mist.

A black cloud formed, within which could be seen a flying sword, a drum, and a battle-axe. All three of them were powerful magical items that were aimed directly at Bai Xiaochun.

The surrounding cultivators from the various clans were shocked, and began to tremble in fear. When they sensed three Foundation Establishment cultivation bases, they cried out in alarm.

“Foundation Establishment!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered. His hair stood up on end as a sensation of deadly crisis swept over him. His eyes went wide, and his pupils constricted as he mentally recalled the Fallen Sword World, and his flight from the Luochen Clan. The feeling of proud complacency from moments before had been replaced by veins of steel.

“You people... want to kill me?” His eyes began to shine brightly. It would have been possible to simply dodge the attack unleashed by these three assassins, but there were countless innocent bystanders present, as well as Du Lingfei. Furthermore, everyone around him was in Qi Condensation, whereas the three assassins were...

Foundation Establishment experts!!

They were only in the Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment stage, but their cultivation bases appeared to be near the great circle of early Foundation Establishment!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were already bloodshot as he stood there in front of Du Lingfei, and he looked just like he had when facing the Luochen Clan. He didn't dodge, nor did he flee. He raised his right hand, and blinding golden light emanated from his entire body. The power of nine spiritual seas and Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment erupted out, causing Bai Xiaochun to seem much larger than he actually was!

All of a sudden, a huge illusory palm materialized in front of him, golden in color, which shot forward to block the incoming attack!

Shockingly, he was single-handedly blocking the combined attack of three Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivators!

Du Lingfei stood there in a daze, looking at Bai Xiaochun's back. It was almost like the world around her had vanished, and she was once again being chased by the Luochen Clan.

She seemed conflicted, and it was in that moment that her right hand, which was inside of her sleeve, suddenly turned a bit blurry. A moment later, it was back to normal, looking fair and fine like usual.

All of this takes some time to describe, but actually happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. As soon as Bai Xiaochun let loose his counterattack, massive rumbling sounds echoed out, and black cloud unleashed by the three assassins was crushed as if by an enormous mountain.

As the boom echoed out, the ground beneath Bai Xiaochun's feet cracked and crumbled. Everyone within about thirty meters of him staggered, and some of them coughed up blood. However, none were killed.

Being directly protected by Bai Xiaochun, Du Lingfei wasn't hurt at all. However, all of the tables, the decorative rocks, and the pine trees in the area were completely destroyed.

The black cloud collapsed, and the flying sword, the drum and the battle-axe were sent spinning off to the side.

The three assassins were clearly shocked that Bai Xiaochun had blocked their attack with a single palm strike. Just as they were about to unleash another attack, Bai Xiaochun's voice echoed out, filled with rage, "You people are courting death!"

Without a moment's hesitation, he shot through the air toward the group of three.

One of the men tried to fall back, but was too slow. With the help of his wings, Bai Xiaochun appeared in front of him at almost the same moment that he took off, two fingers lashing out with the power of the Throat Crushing Grasp. Instantly, his fingers were on



the man's neck.

A cracking sound rang out, and the man's eyes went wide. Blood sprayed out of his torn throat as Bai Xiaochun tossed him off to the side to block the other two from retrieving the flying sword and the battle-axe.

A boom echoed out as the man's corpse exploded into bits, sending blood and gore flying out in all directions. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun turned, piercing through the cloud of gore, his expression matchlessly vicious.

The murderous aura which was now exploding out from him had appeared before thanks to the Luo Chen Clan, and had also been seen when he slaughtered countless enemies in the Fallen Sword Abyss. He... was out to kill!

The surviving man and woman were both Foundation Establishment cultivators, but at the moment, their scalps were tingling in fear. The power on display by Bai Xiaochun completely exceeded their expectations.

“So this is Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment....” Exchanging a bitter glance, they turned to flee. Since they couldn't kill Bai Xiaochun, then the only thing they had a mind left to do was get away. However, there was no way Bai Xiaochun would let that happen.

Almost at the exact moment that they took to flight, Bai Xiaochun, his eyes even more bloodshot than before, sped into

motion. The full power of his Foundation Establishment cultivation base erupted, along with the Waterswamp Kingdom. The sky went dark, and a shocking pressure descended, causing the two fleeing assassins to cry out in alarm.

Then, Bai Xiaochun's wings flapped, and he left after images behind as he sped toward the man. The man's face fell as he tried to defend himself, but there was no way he could move faster than a fist strike unleashed by someone who had broken through the first shackle of mortality.

That fist exploded like thunder, slamming into the man's chest and unleashing unspeakable force. His eyes exploded, and then his organs, his bones, his flesh, and his blood all burst out in chunks in all directions.

The last assassin was the woman. Screaming in terror, she tried to flee, and even managed to get about 300 meters away. But then, Bai Xiaochun turned and waved his right index finger through the air.

“Violet Qi... Cauldron Summoning!”

Boundless violet qi swirled in the air above the woman, rapidly transforming into an enormous violet cauldron.

Then, Bai Xiaochun clenched his hand into a fist!

The violet cauldron shattered, creating a huge explosion that

instantly overwhelmed the woman.

In the blink of an eye, she was killed in body and soul!

Silence reigned. Everyone in the area was staring in shock and awe at Bai Xiaochun. Although they all had heard that Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment was powerful, none of them could ever have imagined that not only would the Foundation Establishment assassins be unable to defeat him, but that he would kill them as easily as turning over his hand!

Even as everyone stood there gasping, Du Lingfei's expression turned very grim, and she said, "How did those three get in here? I can't believe the Eastwood City's grand spell formation isn't active. Immediately investigate the records to see which clan is responsible. As the official emissary to this city, I demand an explanation for this matter!

"The cultivator clans will conduct a thorough search of the entire city: interrogate anyone who seems suspicious. It's likely that those three aren't the only assassins here!"

Around the same time, numerous beams of light appeared up above. Now that the cultivator clans knew that Bai Xiaochun was in the city, the patriarchs and other leaders were all showing up.

When the patriarchs saw the bloody scene down below, their expressions flickered. Then they heard Du Lingfei's words, and their own killing intent began to roil. One of the patriarchs suddenly looked sick as he realized that his clan had been

responsible for maintaining the spell formation for the past few months.

“Fellow Daoist Bai, Goddess Du: the Li Clan will definitely investigate this matter to the bitter end. Let the sun and moon bear witness to the fact that we are faithful and true to the Spirit Stream Sect!!”

## Chapter 172: I'm Sorry, Bai Xiaochun

---

That night, martial law was imposed on Eastwood City. All of the cultivator clans sprang into action, carrying out a thorough investigation in the entire city. As for Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei, they disappeared into the night.

Du Lingfei explained to Bai Xiaochun that her commission was almost over, and there would be no harm in returning to the sect early. As such, she would accompany him on his way back.

\*\*

It was late at night. Stars twinkled in the sky, and the moon hung high and bright. Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei sat on a mountaintop looking out at the stars. Du Lingfei looked even more beautiful than usual under the starlight. Smiling, she looked over at Bai Xiaochun as he recounted the events which had occurred during their years apart.

“You wouldn’t believe it, boo. On the south bank, they actually pelted me with stones. Man, that hurt so much....

“I didn’t mean for things in 10,000 Snakes Valley to turn out that way! I just wanted the snakes to look a little cuter....

“After you get back to the sect, boo, you definitely have to tell me if you see that damned rabbit!

“Those guys on the north bank are complete bullies. I got sent to the north bank, alone and impoverished. I scuttled around with my tail between my legs, scared of offending anyone, but they still didn’t let me off the hook....” As he told his stories of the Spirit Stream Sect, Du Lingfei occasionally comforted him and occasionally chuckled. The looks of praise and surprise she gave him got Bai Xiaochun even more worked up.

She protested his use of the nickname ‘boo’, and did so more than once, but it didn’t do any good. In fact, the more she protested, the more he used it.

“Boo, boo, boo....”

Finally, she simply shook her head and sighed in resignation.

Eventually, they found a mountain cave where they settled down for the night. Bai Xiaochun sat down cross-legged to meditate, and after a bit of time passed, a gentle breeze picked up. Strangely, Bai Xiaochun didn’t notice the breeze at all.

Du Lingfei opened her eyes and looked over at Bai Xiaochun, mixed emotions swirling in her eyes. After a moment, she stood and walked out of the cave to look up at the bright moon up overhead. A gust of wind blew a strand of her hair out of place, and she reached up to tuck it behind her ear.

However, when her finger reached the hair, it passed directly through it. Du Lingfei looked at her shimmering index finger, and the complexity in her eyes deepened. Clenching her hand into a fist

caused the finger to become solid again, after which she tucked the stray hair into place.

“Not much time left....”

Some more time passed. Looking very melancholy, Du Lingfei walked back into the cave and looked at Bai Xiaochun sitting there quietly. Being careful not to jostle him, she sat down by his side and rested her head on his shoulder. After she closed her eyes, a smile appeared on her face.

Time passed as they traveled along. Three days went by, which didn't seem like a very long time for Bai Xiaochun. He fantasized a bit about what it would be like to return to the sect as a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment expert, and how he would be the center of all attention. Every time he thought about it, he got more excited.

Du Lingfei wanted to slow the trip down, but when she saw how excited he was, she simply smiled and held her tongue. On the third day, Bai Xiaochun's Foundation Establishment cultivation base stabilized, and they were getting very close to the Spirit Stream Sect.

Deep in the night of the third day, when they were only about a day's journey from the Spirit Stream Sect, Du Lingfei suggested that they rest for a bit. They found a mountain cave, where Bai Xiaochun began to recount his terrifying experiences in the Fallen Sword World. As he spoke, he began to feel tired, and before he realized what was happening, was asleep.

Everything was very quiet, with the only sound being the popping and hissing of the little fire they'd built. Inside the cave, the flames cast dancing shadows, and outside, it was pitch black. Everything was very peaceful.

Du Lingfei gazed into the fire for a while, then looked over at the sleeping Bai Xiaochun, a soft look in her eyes as she thought back to the past. By this point, she wasn't paying any attention to her physical body, which was starting to shimmer and turn translucent.

After a long moment passed, she sighed. Giving Bai Xiaochun a deep look, she rose to her feet, trembling a bit. At this point, she noticed his mouth curve up into a smile as he slept. Apparently he was having a wonderful dream of some sort.

Leaning down, she kissed him softly on the lips, then turned and walked out of the cave, a look of determination spreading across her face.

As she emerged, the air rippled and distorted as nine shadowy figures appeared. They were all mysterious and enigmatic, even bizarre, and as they stood there, the air around them shimmered and flickered.

Unexpectedly, all nine of the figures clasped hands and bowed deeply to Du Lingfei. From the respect they showed, they almost seemed like servants.



One of the shadowy figures stepped forward and spoke in a raspy voice that almost seemed to emanate from the ancient past. “Junior Matriarch, the task you assigned us has been accomplished. All eleven individuals are right here.”

With that, he waved his hand, causing eleven severed heads to tumble out. The faces of each and every head were twisted into expressions of terror and disbelief.

Shockingly, these were all the spies that had infiltrated Eastwood City with the intention of killing Bai Xiaochun.

Du Lingfei ignored the severed heads and the nine shadowy figures. Turning around, she looked at the slumbering Bai Xiaochun.

“Everything about me in the Spirit Stream Sect was a sham,” she murmured, her eyes glistening as if tears were welling up. “The only real thing was that time when the Luo Chen Clan was chasing us.

“My mission is accomplished, but for some reason, I’m not happy. I hope you can forgive me.... I’m sorry, Bai Xiaochun.” As the tears spilled out onto her cheeks, they rolled down her face and transformed into ash which drifted away into the wind.

One of the shadowy figures clasped hands and respectfully said, “Junior Matriarch, this mortal body the patriarch crafted for you won’t last for much longer. He sent us here to escort you back. Will you be coming, ma’am?”

Du Lingfei continued to look at Bai Xiaochun for a long moment, then nodded lightly. She looked exhausted. Finally, she turned to leave. As she did, her body slowly vanished, transforming into nothing more than smoke. The nine shadowy figures also vanished....

As for the eleven severed heads, they dissolved into ash.

The following morning at dawn, as the first rays of sunlight reached into the cave, Bai Xiaochun squinted as he slowly opened his eyes.

“I’m thirsty, boo....” he said, yawning. He was a bit surprised; after beginning to practice cultivation, he’d found that he didn’t need to sleep as often, but just now, he’d slept for quite a long time. Rubbing his eyes, he stood up and looked around for Du Lingfei.

When he didn’t see her, he didn’t think too much of it. Walking out of the cave, he looked over at the rising sun and then stretched lazily.

“I must have tired myself out too much recently. Man, what a good night’s sleep.” At the moment, he felt more energetic than ever, as though a boundless life force were pulsing inside of him. His nine spiritual seas were golden through and through, and he was completely and fully in the Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment stage.

His aura had ceased to focus inward, and with every breath he took, he could almost hear waves crashing in his spiritual seas.

He felt better now than he ever had before, and decided to meditate for a bit, both to familiarize himself with his Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment and its Heaven-Dao aura, and also to wait for Du Lingfei.

After two hours passed, and Du Lingfei hadn't returned, Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, feeling somewhat nervous.

"Still not back yet?" he thought. He pulled out a transmission jade slip and sent a message to her, but it did as much good as throwing a rock into the sea. There wasn't any response at all.

"What's going on?!" He shot to his feet and immediately began to search the area. By the time evening fell, he'd looked everywhere, but hadn't found a single trace.... Du Lingfei... had disappeared!

By this point, he was wracked with anxiety, and had the feeling that something bad had happened. Face ashen, eyes bloodshot, he expanded his search.

"Where are you, boo!?"

"Du Lingfei, where are you!?!?"

"Du Lingfei...." He searched for four days in a row, looking everywhere he could think of. Soon his hair was disheveled, and he

looked like he was losing weight. However, Du Lingfei was nowhere to be found.

“Did I say something wrong, boo? Why are you hiding from me? Tell me!

“Du Lingfei, come out, wherever you are!

“What happened!?”

He was going mad with anxiety by this point. Eventually, he went back to the cave where he had last seen her, and searched the entire place with a fine toothed comb. Unfortunately, the result was the same as before.

He wasn't sure why, but his heart hurt. It felt like someone was ripping it into pieces, and was a feeling the likes of which he had never experienced before. Clutching his hands tightly at the pit of his stomach, he thought back to how he had fallen asleep for no apparent reason, and then his heart sank. Eventually, a blank look appeared in his eyes.

\*\*

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had been away for so long without returning caused the sect to send out even more people to find him. Hou Yunfei led a team, as did other key disciples from the south and north banks. Even Li Qinghou helped.

When they finally found him, he was sitting outside of that cave, his eyes bloodshot, his face gaunt. He looked bedeviled.

When Li Qinghou saw him, he felt a twinge of pain at the sight, and asked, “Xiaochun, what’s wrong?!”

Bai Xiaochun shivered. Eyes blank, he turned to look at Li Qinghou and murmured, “Uncle Li, Du Lingfei... is gone.”

# Chapter 173: The World!

---

As he was escorted back to the Spirit Stream Sect, Bai Xiaochun maintained his silence. Occasionally he would look over his shoulder in the direction of the cave where Du Lingfei had gone missing.

Li Qinghou issued orders for the Spirit Stream Sect and the cultivator clans to search for Du Lingfei. However, not a single clue turned up. It was as if she had vanished into thin air.

This strange turn of events was taken seriously even by the higher echelons of the Spirit Stream Sect's leadership.

Because of the disappearance of Du Lingfei, Bai Xiaochun lost all excitement at having reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment.

The sect held a grand ceremony, and Bai Xiaochun's name gradually came to be known throughout the entire cultivation world of the eastern Lower Reaches. News spread about the fierce fighting over heavenstring energy in the Fallen Sword World, and soon, people were saying that Bai Xiaochun had surpassed Master Limitless.

However, Bai Xiaochun didn't really care much about all of that.

He received a hefty reward from the sect, and when the other disciples looked at him, their eyes shone with respect. Even the prime elders and the patriarchs gazed upon him with admiration.

And yet, his heart was filled with disappointment.

During the grand ceremony thrown by the sect, Bai Xiaochun revealed the corpses of the disciples who had lost their lives in the Fallen Sword World. Everything went quiet. The peak lords and the sect leader looked on sadly, as did the prime elders from Mount Daoseed.

After the ceremony was over, many people realized that Bai Xiaochun seemed a lot quieter than before. It was as if he had forgotten about things such as glory and the pride. People would often see him alone on Fragrant Cloud Peak, looking lost.

He was like a different person, and many of the disciples who were close to him felt horrible.

Bruiser ran over from the north bank. Apparently he could sense Bai Xiaochun's dark mood, and simply sat next to him to keep him company.

Big Fatty Zhang came a few times, but was never sure what to say, and simply sat there sighing. Hou Yunfei also visited to keep him silent company.

Hou Xiaomei came to comfort him, as if to remind him that even though Du Lingfei was gone, she was still there.

“Big bro Xiaochun, I won't go missing....”

Xu Baocai came with lots of rumors. For instance, Gongsun Wan'er had gone missing, but her soul lamp hadn't burned out. Her brother Gongsun Yun had gone crazy looking for her, but hadn't been able to find her.

Xu Baocai had talked to all of the disciples who came back from the three Foundation Establishment Holy Lands, and had compiled all of the information into a comprehensive report. He also had information about all of the Chosen from the other sects.

“Sect Uncle Bai, you probably didn't hear that while you were in the Fallen Sword World, a Chosen unexpectedly rose up in the Primordial Spirit Hollow. He's an amazing disciple from the Pill Stream Sect!

“His name is Lin Mu, and he turned out to be a real dark horse in the competition. That 'Mu' character in his name is the same character from the word 'tomb'! He actually mastered the Pill Stream Sect's most powerful grand magic, the Primeval Medicinal Daoseed Incantation! It was only later that on that a lot of the Pill Stream Sect disciples realized that he had secretly planted Daoseeds in them. Eventually, he reached Earthstring Foundation Establishment with eight Tideflows!

“In the Lone Hell Pocket Realm, another shocking Chosen rose up. Her name is second only to yours, Sect Uncle Bai. She's from the Blood Stream Sect, and wears a mask with a plum blossom on it. She completely stomped on everyone else in the Holy Land, and became the second person from the Blood Stream Sect after Master Limitless to reach the peak of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, nine Tideflows! She slaughtered countless other



disciples. It was completely brutal. They call her Devilwitch Xuemei!

“Now that I think about it, it seems like there was something really strange going on in the Foundation Establishment Holy Lands. Dark horses popped up everywhere! Although, you were obviously the most shocking dark horse, Sect Uncle Bai, and the strongest of them all. You reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!

“This time around, the Spirit Stream Sect really took the glory!

“Oh, by the way, before Ghostfang went into secluded meditation, he picked his legacy at the Ancestral Darktunnel, and twenty legacy shafts lit up! The entire sect was thrown into an uproar!” Thanks to Xu Baocai’s detailed information, Bai Xiaochun gradually came to learn about everything that had happened in the Lone Hell Pocket Realm and the Arcane Spirit Hollow.

Although none of the events in the other two Holy Lands were as brutal as the Fallen Sword World, there were still many deaths and casualties.

In addition to the information about the other sects, Xu Baocai also told him about the other Spirit Stream Sect disciples from the other two Holy Lands. Zhou Xinqi, Lu Tianlei, Gongsun Yun, Xu Song, and several other disciples had all reached Earthstring Foundation Establishment. However, none of them had gotten more than six Tideflows. After returning, all of them were assigned to various positions in the sect, then went into secluded meditation to strive toward the Legacy Echelon.

According to Xu Baocai, Ghostfang and Shangguan Tianyou had also chosen to go into secluded meditation. Furthermore, Beihan Lie had become even more famous and important in the sect. As for Hou Yunfei, he had been taken in as an apprentice by one of the prime elders.

Everyone had acquired their own good fortune. As for the disciples from the north and south banks who had received help from Bai Xiaochun to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment, none of them were taken as apprentices by prime elders. However, all of them were promoted, becoming elders who took the lead in administering sect affairs.

The number of disciples who reached Earthstring Foundation Establishment from the Spirit Stream Sect vastly outnumbered those from the other sects, giving them much more power and influence within that stage of cultivation.

As for Bai Xiaochun, because he had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, he was named Legacy Echelon-designate.

However, he didn't get much feeling from that. He was really having a hard time pulling himself out of his depression. Time passed. Half a month later, Zheng Yuandong walked over to the forlorn Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave and sat down in front of him.

“Xiaochun, when you were in the Fallen Sword Abyss, the

founding patriarch issued a Dharmic decree. Fragrant Cloud Peak has been infiltrated by a spy!” Zheng Yuandong’s words caused a tremor to run through Bai Xiaochun. The truth was that Bai Xiaochun was no fool; his mind was quick and sharp. During the half month that had passed, he had put a lot of thought into what had occurred during his time with Du Lingfei recently. Although nothing seemed out of the ordinary about her on the surface, how could Bai Xiaochun not have noticed the mixed emotions in her eyes?

He also remembered that on the night she went missing, she had been the one to suggest resting, after which he had slept the whole night through.

All of that told him that, most likely, Du Lingfei had left of her own volition.

As for why she had left, he had the feeling there was some secret reason for it. In the end, he didn’t want to think about the matter too much; he already had some guesses as to what was going on.

Zheng Yuandong didn’t go into any further detail about the spy. There were some things that simply needed to be mentioned to Bai Xiaochun. Talking about them too much might not be a good thing.

He was fairly certain Bai Xiaochun understood the implication behind his words.

After a long moment of silence, Zheng Yuandong changed the

subject, and in doing so, unwittingly touched on something that had come to be a sensitive subject for Bai Xiaochun because of the events of recent weeks.

“Bai Xiaochun, do you know why the Luo Chen Clan turned traitor?!”

Because of what had occurred with Du Lingfei, and Bai Xiaochun’s reluctance to ponder the matter, the events concerning the Luo Chen Clan had become a bit hazy. However, after hearing Zheng Yuandong’s words, he looked up. Although he didn’t want to think about Du Lingfei right now, the deadly events with the Luo Chen Clan were something that he would never be able to forget.

Subconsciously, he reached down and rubbed the place on his arm where the jagged edge of his broken arm bone had poked out of the flesh. The wound had long since healed, but every time he touched that spot, he thought about how he’d stabbed Crown Prince Chen Heng in the neck with his own shattered bone.

Originally, it had seemed that the Luo Chen Clan turned traitor because they wanted to break free from the control of the Spirit Stream Sect. They had even gone to the lengths of killing mortals to reverse the flow of their own blood for that very purpose. However, there were multiple layers to the events that had occurred. Without something deeper motivating them, they would never have done such a thing. After all, while the eastern Lower Reaches was a vast place, in some ways, it was a very small world.

After betraying the Spirit Stream Sect, the Luo Chen Clan would

have had a very difficult time surviving, even if they had successfully reversed their bloodlines.

Bai Xiaochun had pondered the matter some in the past, but the sect had actively suppressed information about the incident, essentially sweeping the news under the rug.

However, Bai Xiaochun was an observant person, and had taken note of the frequency with which the sect dispatched Foundation Establishment cultivators to the outside. Clearly, something bigger was going on. Considering his previous speculations, the fact that Zheng Yuandong was bringing up the subject now was a bit of a shock.

“You’re a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivator now, and also the legacy echelon-designate. You are the pride and joy of the sect, and as such, you qualify to be privy to certain secrets that ordinary disciples are unaware of. I have four important questions to pose to you.” Zheng Yuandong’s solemn expression caused the atmosphere in the immortal’s cave to instantly turn serious.

“First of all, are you aware of the nature of the world in which we live?” As he spoke the words, Zheng Yuandong’s eyes seemed to focus on something far in the distance, and even his voice quavered a bit.

Bai Xiaochun shivered. He understood a bit about the world thanks to his own research into the sect’s ancient records. However, even those explanations weren’t very clear.

“The world in which we live is huge,” Zheng Yuandong continued. “In the very middle of it, there exists a vast sea, which is golden in color, and is filled with enormous rolling waves. According to the legends, there is an island in the middle of that sea, which is the location of the passage that spans the gap between heaven and earth.

“That is why the sea is called the Heavenspan Sea. Furthermore, the world we live in is called the Heavenspan Realm, or sometimes, the lands of Heavenspan! For years and years on end, countless almighty beings have sought to cross the sea and set foot onto that island. Unfortunately, no one has ever succeeded.

“There are four mighty rivers which connect to the Heavenspan Sea. They stretch out to the east, west, south and north. It’s hard to say whether the rivers exist because of the sea, or vice versa. In any case, those four rivers are known as the eastern, northern, southern, and western Heavenspan Rivers.

“The four great rivers that connect to the sea are known as the Upper Reaches. Each and every one of them eventually splits into four smaller branches which are known as the Middle Reaches. Further down the line, those branches also split into four smaller branches, which are known as the Lower Reaches.

“Beyond that, the branches split up into even smaller branches, which are the delta regions.

“The Heavenspan Sea and the various rivers are sort of like a tree. That is the nature of the world we live in.” Zheng Yuandong looked over at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes shining with sharp light.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. Zheng Yuandong's words crashed in his mind like thunder. Slowly, his old understanding of the world shattered and dispersed, to be replaced by the new version which had just been described by Zheng Yuandong.

“Second. Do you know why the four most powerful sects of the eastern Lower Reaches have the word ‘stream’ in their name? Spirit Stream Sect, Blood Stream Sect, Profound Stream Sect, Pill Stream Sect!” Zheng Yuandong smiled faintly as he thought back to the first time he had been told about the world. He had been just as shaken as Bai Xiaochun was right now.

# Chapter 174: Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

---

“The location where the four rivers flow into the sea from the east, west, south and north is known as the Upper Reaches. In that same location, there are four ancient and powerful sects that have existed there for tens upon tens of thousands of years. Perhaps they are as old as the world itself. They are the four most powerful entities in the world.

“Those four powerful ancient sects control the four major rivers, as well as all of the subsequent branches of those rivers, all the way down to the delta regions.

“The ancient sect that controls the eastern reaches of the cultivation world is called the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

“The headquarters of the sect is far, far away. A Foundation Establishment cultivator could spend an entire lifetime flying toward it without reaching it.

“Subsidiary to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect are four powerful courts that control each of the four branches of the river. They are the Starry River Court, the Sky River Court, the Dao River Court, and the Polarity River Court!

“Those four powerful courts each control four branches that break off from the larger rivers. The Spirit Stream Sect is on the second stream controlled by the Sky River Court. The Blood Stream Sect is on the first stream, the Pill Stream Sect is on the third stream, and the Profound Stream Sect is on the fourth. The



Sky River Court is the parent sect to all of our four sects, and above it is the ancient Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.” Zheng Yuandong’s words struck Bai Xiaochun like lightning. This revelation regarding the world around him left him shocked and panting.

“The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect....” he murmured, feeling a bit dizzy.

“Third. Do you know why all of the sects in the world are built on the Heavenspan River? Even down in the delta, they try to get as close to the river as possible” This third question made Bai Xiaochun feel like a third lightning bolt was about to slam down into him.

“The Heavenspan Realm is enormous. Gargantuan in size. Although it wouldn’t be correct to say that it has no end, the truth is that few people have ever reached the farthest borders of our world. One strange thing about our world is that she has no spiritual energy!”

“No spiritual energy? That’s impossible!” Bai Xiaochun again felt himself being completely and utterly shaken.

“There isn’t a bit of spiritual energy in the entire world. Well, perhaps it’s more accurate to say that heaven and earth have no inherent spiritual energy. All it produces is a chaotic power that is toxic to cultivators, but provides nourishments to beasts.

“For as long as there has been a written history in our world, it’s always been this way. The only reason cultivators are able to

practice cultivation is due to the Heavenspan Sea!

“The Heavenspan Sea is the location of a shocking amount of spiritual energy. Apparently, every drop of seawater there contains boundless spiritual energy, and as the water flows down the four great rivers, into the branches and streams and even the delta regions, it brings spiritual energy with it!

“The spiritual energy is strongest near the Heavenspan Sea itself. And of course, the closer you get to the rivers, the stronger the local spiritual energy. The Upper Reaches have the strongest spiritual energy, with the Middle Reaches being a bit weaker, and the Lower Reaches even weaker than that. The delta regions are the weakest.

“The further you get away from the Heavenspan River, the weaker the spiritual energy gets. Eventually, you would reach a point where there is no spiritual energy at all. Almost half of the entire world we live in is made up of such areas. In fact, the areas between the rivers are all like that, devoid of spiritual energy.

“This actually serves as somewhat of a safeguard. After all, if any two of the ancient sects wished to go to war, it would be a very difficult thing to do. Because of that, most wars are fought along the branches of the rivers, not between the larger sects.”

Zheng Yuandong looked at the reeling Bai Xiaochun and continued on. “Fourth. Why did the Luochen Clan turn traitor!?”

“The Blood Stream Sect, Spirit Stream Sect, Profound Stream

Sect, and Pill Stream Sect are all subsidiaries of the Sky River Court. Of course, each and every one of our sects hopes to elevate their status and become the main sect controlling this branch of the river!

“That is our patriarch’s dream, and what the Spirit Stream Sect has been working toward for the past 10,000 years. That is also the entire purpose of the Legacy Echelon!

“A few years ago, an extremely rare opportunity presented itself!

“The Sky River Court did something to arouse the wrath of the ancient Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Punishment was doled out, and the court was nearly completely wiped out. The patriarch was killed, and their power structures destroyed. They are unprecedentedly weak, which means that it is now possible to supplant them!

“A spot has opened to become the sect controlling the other streams of the river, and the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect doesn’t care who it is. The Blood, Spirit, Profound, and Pill Stream Sects all have a chance. Naturally, all four sects have begun fighting over that spot. Whichever of us manages to defeat the other three sects will eventually rise up to command everything downstream!

“At this point, it’s not important who was backing the Luochen Clan. Maybe it was the Blood Stream Sect, maybe it was the Profound Stream Sect, or maybe even the Pill Stream Sect. Again, it doesn’t matter. They are all our opponents, and at the same time, potential allies!

“Other sects have been casting their fishing lines into our territory, so to speak, hoping to snag some advantage. We’ve done the same thing as well.” Zheng Yuandong smiled, and there was something cold and sinister about it that almost seemed out of character. The truth was that to members of his own sect, Zheng Yuandong was a wise old man who seemed as gentle as a spring breeze. But when it came to fighting people outside the sect, he was even more cold and vicious than Daoist Jackal Ouyang Jie.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was being crushed by waves of shock because of the four questions that had just been asked and answered.

Eyeing Bai Xiaochun, he slowly continued, “Bai Xiaochun, do you want to know why that island in the Heavenspan Sea, which leads to the path that spans the heavens, has been the goal of so many almighty beings?” This was the first time that Zheng Yuandong had seen Bai Xiaochun look somewhat alive after the incident with Du Lingfei. Thankfully, he had saved his most powerful words for last!

“The legends say that if you walk the passage that spans the heavens, you can acquire that which is eternal! In other words, you can live forever!”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that last part, his scalp started tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. He began to tremble visibly, and pant. He had never felt so shaken in his entire life. His entire mind was suddenly filled with the idea of being able to live forever.

“If you want to live forever, you have to be powerful enough to walk out into the heavens. That’s a very long road, and you can’t let yourself get distracted by the scenery along the way. You have to walk the path and live life without any regrets!

“Here are four jade slips. The first will serve as your command medallion, identifying you as a sect elder. The second will open your new immortal’s cave on Mount Daoseed. The third will allow you to enter the Ancestral Darktunnel to select the legacy that is your right now that you’ve reached Foundation Establishment. The last is the key to the arcane pocket realm that you won entry to after taking first place in the Chosen battles.” Zheng Yuandong placed four jade slips down onto the ground. Seeing how excited Bai Xiaochun looked, he was finally able to relax a bit. After emerging from Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave moments later, he saw Li Qinghou off in the distance, waiting for news. As he walked over, he gave him a slight nod.

A smile broke out on Li Qinghou’s face, and he sighed. “Many thanks, sect leader. Now I can finally rest at ease when I go into secluded meditation!”

“You shouldn’t worry so much, Qinghou. He’s my Junior Brother, so of course I’ll take care of him. I hope that after you emerge from your secluded meditation, the Spirit Stream Sect will have another legacy echelon cultivator!” Zheng Yuandong was actually a bit envious. However, there was no way he could ever reach the legacy echelon. At most, he might end his life as a prime elder in the future.

Li Qinghou clasped hands and bowed. Giving Bai Xiaochun’s

immortal's cave a final look, he departed along with Zheng Yuandong.

Inside the immortal's cave, Bai Xiaochun was panting in excitement. In fact, he didn't even notice that Zheng Yuandong had left. He remained in a bit of a daze deep into the night. Finally, he looked up, and his eyes were shining brightly.

"I'm going to live forever!!" He buried the matter of Du Lingfei deep in his heart and walked out of his immortal's cave, thinking about the wider world he lived in, and also about his desire to live forever!

After looking over the four jade slips he held in his hand, his eyes shone with anticipation.

Thinking back to the second volume of the Undying Codex that the gravekeeper had given him, he murmured, "Now I can start to cultivate the second volume of the Undying Codex, the Undying Heavenly King."

He had looked over the second volume before, and already knew that it was divided into four levels that were much more powerful than the Undying Skin. Furthermore, even just cultivating the first level would allow him access to a secret magic that was even more formidable than the Throat Crushing Grasp!

"The Mountain Shaking Bash!" The night passed quickly. At dawn, he stepped outside again and looked at the rising sun. As of this point, he had put the matter of Du Lingfei's disappearance

clearly out of mind.

“Bai Xiaochun is back!” Flicking his sleeve, he stuck his chin up and transformed into a beam of light that shot toward Mount Daoseed.

# Chapter 175: Please Behave Yourself, Elder Brother Bai

---

Finally in high spirits again, Bai Xiaochun shot away from Fragrant Cloud Peak toward Mount Daoseed. In accordance with the sect rules of the Spirit Stream Sect, now that he had reached Foundation Establishment, he was no longer a disciple, but rather, an elder.

Elders were people with exceptional latent talent who were given special duties by the sect. Oftentimes, the seven peak lords would assign them certain important tasks or matters. Back when Bai Xiaochun had been in the Inner Sect, Elder Zhou had been one of the Foundation Establishment elders on Fragrant Cloud Peak.

Such people were fundamentally Chosen, and all of them strove to reach the Legacy Echelon. They were not people who could be taken lightly. Generally speaking, they did not live on the various mountain peaks, but rather, on Mount Daoseed.

Occasionally, some of them would reach the Legacy Echelon, but for the most part, after a hundred or more years passed and it became clear that they couldn't reach the Gold Core stage, they would settle for being peak lords. For those who did manage to reach Gold Core, but took longer than two sixty-year cycles to do so, they would become prime elders.

There were some outstanding individuals such as Li Qinghou who would be promoted to peak lord early. They would simultaneously focus on both cultivation and the administration of the mountain peak. Then, at some point before two sixty-year



cycles had passed, they would go into secluded meditation to try to break through to the Gold Core stage.

Although it looked on the surface as if the Spirit Stream Sect only had a bit over a hundred Foundation Establishment cultivators, the truth was that there were more than that on Mount Daoseed.

Only by reaching Foundation Establishment would one qualify to have an immortal's cave on Mount Daoseed, which also served as a symbol of power for such people.

Most of the immortal's caves were on the lower half of the mountain, but even they had stronger spiritual energy than could be found outside on the seven mountain peaks.

The immortal's caves on the top half of the mountain were reserved for the prime elders and the sect leader.

Having reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, Bai Xiaochun had a very high position within the Spirit Stream Sect, almost like that of a patriarch. His immortal's cave was located halfway up the mountain, in the same location as many of the higher ranking Foundation Establishment cultivators.

Although some people weren't too happy about that, there was nothing they could do. Now that he had reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, Bai Xiaochun was definitely a rising star in the sect, someone who was the center of all attention.

Mount Daoseed was huge. Back when he became the Junior Brother of the sect leader, and an Inner Sect disciple, he had been able to visit the place, but most locations had been restricted, and impossible for him to enter. As such, it had seemed like a vast and majestic place.

Now, he was back as a Foundation Establishment expert. To him, the sight of Mount Daoseed rising up among the seven other mountain peaks looked like an adult standing amidst a group of children.

As he made his way along, any Spirit Stream Sect disciple who saw him would look at him with reverence, and would call out to him in greeting. At first, he had planned to rocket through the air, but when he realized what was happening, he slowed down. Clasp ing his hands behind his back, he looked around like a member of the Senior generation, nodding here and there with a look of praise in his eyes.

Strange expressions appeared on the faces of the disciples, and many began to think back to events of the past.

On Green Crest Peak, an elder was leading a group of a few dozen Outer Sect disciples as they trained in sword techniques. When he looked up and saw Bai Xiaochun, he sighed and said, "All of you, look up there. See that cultivator strolling along surrounded by golden light? That's who I was telling you about earlier, the greatest Chosen in the Spirit Stream Sect, Bai Xiaochun!"

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples looked up in awe, their eyes shining with enthusiasm.

“That’s Sect Uncle Bai?!”

“Sect Uncle Bai is a mighty warrior, and a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment expert. I heard that he outshone all of the other disciples in his generation!”

“Everyone in Sect Uncle Bai’s generation is extraordinary. I heard that Sect Uncle Ghostfang, Sect Aunt Zhou Xinqi, Sect Uncle Shangguan Tianyou, and Sect Uncle Beihan Lie were all monstrously talented Chosen. It’s too bad for them that they were born in the same generation as Sect Uncle Bai.”

These Outer Sect disciples had just recently joined the sect, and had cultivation bases scattered between the third and fifth levels of Qi Condensation. They had heard a lot of stories about Bai Xiaochun; for example, the acid rain incident, the story of lightning striking the sect, and the disaster of 10,000 Snakes Valley. Of course, they took such stories to be mere exaggerations. As for him reaching Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, that was recent news that seemed much more believable.

As Bai Xiaochun flew along, he could see the reactions of the disciples down on Green Crest Peak, and felt all the burning gazes fixed upon him. Moved, he decided that he definitely couldn’t treat these young disciples coldly, nor could he allow them to think that he was some distant cloud floating high above their heads.

Coughing lightly, he changed directions and flew down toward the group of Outer Sect disciples.

The Green Crest Peak elder quickly rose to his feet and clasped hands in greeting. The surrounding Outer Sect disciple followed suit, looking very excited.

“Greetings, Sect Uncle Bai!”

“Sect Uncle Bai, you’re my biggest role model!”

“I love you, Sect Uncle Bai!” The female disciples looked particularly smitten, and stared at him with flushed cheeks and eyes burning with excitement.

Bai Xiaochun was very moved, and couldn’t help but think that everything he had done for the sect really had been worth it. The adoring gazes of these youngsters was already a huge motivating force to him, and as such, he smiled warmly, and proceeded to give them a bit of encouragement.

“Focus well on your cultivation.”

“Keep up the good work, you guys are great!”

“You love your Sect Uncle Bai? Ahem. Work hard at your cultivation, and remember, anything is possible.”

Bai Xiaochun patiently stood there and exchanged a few words with all of the disciples present. Considering how excited they all

were, he gave them a bit of advice about matters, and then, feeling increasingly moved, gave them some more advice.

After giving ten rounds of advice, and repeating himself on more than one occasion, the Outer Sect disciples' eyes began to go blank. They had all addressed him as Sect Uncle Bai at least a few dozen times, to the point where they were starting to wonder what exactly was going on.

The elder wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry, and couldn't help but think about what it had been like back when Bai Xiaochun was promoted to the Inner Sect, and went around forcing people to address him as Sect Uncle.

Sometime in the afternoon, Bai Xiaochun finally felt satisfied, but instead of going to Mount Daoseed, he headed to Violet Cauldron Peak and Fragrant Cloud Peak, where he was received with great enthusiasm. More excited than ever, he proceeded along to the four mountain peaks of the north bank.

Eventually, it was late in the night, and the Outer Sect disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect were really starting to form a strange opinion of Bai Xiaochun. It was at this point that he recalled something important. Clearing his throat, he headed toward Mount Daoseed.

His immortal's cave on Mount Daoseed was very large. In terms of the spell formation and the décor, it vastly exceeded the immortal's cave from his Qi Condensation days. As for the spiritual energy within it, it was shockingly strong to say the least.

There was no hot spring. However, it had a lake inside, upon which swirled mist and fog that made the entire place seem like a celestial paradise.

The area outside the immortal's cave was alive with the singing of birds and the fragrance of flowers. If he wanted to, he could ask for Outer Sect disciples to wait on him and take care of the cave itself. Both outside and inside, the place belonged to him, and was his own personal domain. At the moment, he was sitting at the edge of the lake, looking around in satisfaction.

“I’ve finally reached Foundation Establishment!” He was also thinking about a bit of information he’d gleaned from a jade slip. Considering his current status, he now qualified to accept an apprentice, and was thinking of doing just that. It would probably be a lot of fun.

Soon, word spread that he had arrived on Mount Daoseed, and his immortal's cave was virtually trampled by the crowd of Foundation Establishment cultivators who came to offer greetings and see exactly what Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment looked like.

Of course, people would never come to offer formal greetings without bearing gifts. Bai Xiaochun was shocked over and over again, and eventually, his hands started to twinge with pain from accepting so many gifts. However, the smile never left his face, and he always took time to chat with his visitors.

As for the cultivators who had reached Foundation Establishment in the Fallen Sword Abyss with his help, they were especially grateful.

Half a month later, things finally calmed down. After the visits stopped, Bai Xiaochun decided that it was time to stop fooling around. He couldn't stop thinking about what his Elder Brother, Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong, had told him about the island in the middle of the Heavenspan Sea. From there, it was possible to step out into the heavens and live forever.

“If I want to get to the Heavenspan Sea, I'll definitely have to have a powerful cultivation base. That means I need to work hard at cultivation!” He got up early the next morning. Taking a deep breath, and eyes shining with determination, he headed in the direction of the Ancestral Darktunnel, where he would be able to select the technique he would cultivate in the Foundation Establishment stage.

The Ancestral Darktunnel was a long tunnel in the middle of Mount Daoseed. Upon entering the tunnel, one would find over a hundred shafts leading off in different directions, each one of which represented a different legacy.

Generally speaking, one would bring an authentication device into the tunnel, then activate it, whereupon some of the legacy shafts would light up.

It was a very miraculous thing, and word had it that although the cultivators came to select legacies, sometimes a legacy would select a cultivator!

Of course, things like that were rare. Bai Xiaochun remembered Xu Baocai telling him that when Ghostfang came to select his technique, more than twenty of the legacy shafts had lit up to select him.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't very impressed by that. "What's so amazing about that? So what if twenty legacies selected him? I've reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!"

According to the sect rules, only someone with an authentication device could enter the Ancestral Darktunnel. Anyone who didn't have such a device, but tried to enter anyway, would be instantly killed by the spell formation inside.

Because of that, there wasn't anyone assigned to guard the location. When Bai Xiaochun arrived, nobody was there. After looking around hesitantly for a moment, he walked into the cave-like entrance. A moment later, he was in the beautiful tunnel entrance, facing over a hundred tunnel-like shafts.

Although the shafts didn't look like anything special, Bai Xiaochun knew that once he activated the authentication device, then at least one of the shafts would emit a bright light, which would indicate that he could enter.

He looked around for a moment, and was just about to activate the device when suddenly, a young woman emerged from one of the shafts up ahead.



It was none other than Zhou Xinqi, who had come to acquire her Foundation Establishment technique. Almost as soon as she emerged, she saw Bai Xiaochun.

“Eee? Sect Niece Xinqi!” he said, blinking.

Zhou Xinqi frowned and took a deep breath. Then she gave Bai Xiaochun a level look.

“Greetings, Elder Brother Bai. Please behave yourself here.”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, looking at her in shock. Then he realized that since they were both in the Foundation Establishment stage, they had equal seniority. He suddenly felt as though he had lost out on something very important. After all, despite how many years had passed, he had almost never gotten her to call him Sect Uncle....

Feeling very disappointed, he pushed his finger down onto the authentication device, and the shafts up ahead began to flicker with light!

## Chapter 176: The Only Hidden Legacy

---

The instant that Bai Xiaochun sent some spiritual power into the authentication device, each and every one of the hundred shafts lit up with scintillating light.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the blinding beams shot out, completely illuminating the paradisaical scene inside the cave.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped, and Zhou Xinqi's eyes wide with disbelief and astonishment.

“How is this possible?!?!” Zhou Xinqi exclaimed.

Each one of those more than one hundred shafts represented a legacy, and apparently, all of them were making themselves available to Bai Xiaochun. Essentially, Bai Xiaochun could pick any legacy he wanted.

The shocking scene left Zhou Xinqi dumbstruck. Earlier, only one of the shafts lit up for her, and when Ghostfang caused more than twenty to light up, the entire sect had been shaken.

But then Bai Xiaochun came along and caused more than a hundred to light up....

Even as Zhou Xinqi reeled in shock, she suddenly realized that in addition to lighting up, each shaft began to pulse with gravitational force, as if they were vying for Bai Xiaochun's

attention.

Zhou Xinqi's mind reeled at the astonishing sight of more than a hundred legacy shafts all struggling to impress Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was equally stunned. At the same time, all of the prime elders on Mount Daoseed could sense what was happening, and were shocked. Even the handful of patriarchs in the Spirit Stream Sect looked over with wide eyes.

“Not even the last Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivator that came along did anything like this....”

“This indicates one thing: Bai Xiaochun reached unfathomable heights in the Qi Condensation stage!”

Outside on Mount Daoseed, more than a hundred pillars of light shot up into the clouds above, causing a big stir among the disciples. After all, they had seen something similar occur a month before, when twenty pillars of light shot up for Ghostfang.

Of course, the fact that there were now a hundred pillars of light left the Spirit Stream Sect disciples completely tongue-tied.

Ghostfang was currently sitting in meditation. A tremor ran through him, and he looked up into the sky. He didn't even need to ponder the matter for a single moment.

“Bai Xiaochun....”

Shangguan Tianyou, Beihan Lie, Lu Tianlei, and all of the other Chosen were equally shaken.

Back in the Ancestral Darktunnel, Bai Xiaochun swallowed hard and then blinked, his heart thumping. Zhou Xinqi stood next to him, as mute as a wooden chicken. Finally, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and swished his sleeve.

“Ai,” he muttered. “With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun, caused more than a hundred legacies to accept me. Truly outstanding. And a real headache too. How am I supposed to pick?”

Of course, he spoke loud enough for Zhou Xinqi to hear. Her face darkened, and her heart filled with numerous conflicting emotions.

All of a sudden, in one location that had initially appeared to be just a blank part of the wall, a fissure opened up, causing blinding, sun-like light to spill out into the cave.

Incredible pressure accompanied it, completely surpassing the other hundred legacies. Clearly, the legacy in this shaft was far more powerful and domineering than any of the others!

An intense gravitational force wrapped around Bai Xiaochun, and in the blink of an eye, he was being dragged toward the shaft opening. To his shock, he was almost instantly pulled inside.

The other legacies didn't seem willing to give up, and sent out their own pulses of blinding light. However, there was nothing they could do to change to situation, so they soon calmed down.

The only eye-witness was Zhou Xinqi, who was so stunned she didn't even remember leaving. All she remembered was how the more than one hundred legacies had seemed so anxious and eager, and how the final shaft which had opened didn't seem to be one of the original group.

The instant that Bai Xiaochun was sucked into the shaft with the powerful and domineering legacy, there were five patriarchs on the ninth mountain peak of the Spirit Stream Sect who were all shaken.

Originally, they had been paying close attention to Bai Xiaochun, even before the shocking developments from moments before. In fact, they had even been prepared to prod him with divine will to help him select the best technique.

After all, he was a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivator, someone highly valued by the sect.

But then, a shaft appeared that was not part of the original group, and whisked him away before they could even unleash their divine will.

“That was....”

“Just what kind of destiny does this Bai Xiaochun have!?!?”

“That legacy hasn’t appeared for countless years! It’s the only hidden legacy there!”

Even as they reeled in shock, Bai Xiaochun was sucked in by the gravitational force, and eventually found himself inside a stone chamber.

Moments before, it had been pitch black, darker than the darkest night, but as soon as he arrived, it filled with brilliant light.

He hesitated for a moment, unsure of what the sudden turn of events indicated. After all, he hadn’t selected any legacy; this legacy had selected him. However, it only took a moment for him to recover and look around.

The stone chamber wasn’t very large, and in the very middle of it was a stone book!

“What’s that?” he muttered, walking forward. Almost immediately, he noticed five characters written on the book, characters which were completely eye-catching.

“Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes widened. The name itself sounded very impressive, and he could only imagine how extraordinary it was.

“The south bank has the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, and the north bank has its Heavenspan Shamanic Control Incantation. Could this Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation possibly be a combination of those two?”

Bai Xiaochun continued to examine the stone book, and soon was left gasping by the technique’s introduction. Although it was only a general overview, it was still shocking. “Is it really cultivated using water from of the Heavenspan River?”

According to the description, the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation involved absorbing water from the Heavenspan River into one’s body, using it to nourish oneself and grow stronger. It was divided into four levels, one for the early, mid, and late Foundation Establishment stages, and one for the quasi-Core stage!

Furthermore, cultivating the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation gave access to a Daoist magic called the Heavenspan Dharma Eye!

This technique could also unleash control power, but was on a completely different level than anything from the Qi Condensation stage. In the Qi Condensation stage, control could be exerted through the use of qi, but in the Foundation Establishment, a mere glance with an eye could exert control of all things!

Bai Xiaochun continued to examine the information, and eventually, the stone book blurred, and four magical symbols appeared, each one of which contained volumes of information. As Bai Xiaochun looked them over, he was left more and more shaken.

“Cultivate with the water of the Heavenspan River. In the first level, condense a drop of water. In the second level, a goblet. In the third level, a stone, and in the fourth... a cauldron!” Bai Xiaochun was so shocked that his tongue stuck to the top of his mouth. He couldn’t help but think about how Zheng Yuandong had told him that the Heavenspan Sea was the source of all the spiritual energy in the world.

The Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation was so domineering that you actually had to absorb water from the Heavenspan River....

It was probably a good thing it was only usable in the Foundation Establishment stage. If it went beyond that, Bai Xiaochun could only imagine how powerful it could be.

He could suddenly see himself waving his hand, and sucking dry all four of the great branches of the Heavenspan River.

Then, he saw himself hovering in the air, with the Heavenspan Sea transforming into his spiritual sea.

“So powerful!!” he gasped, trembling. He was even more shaken by the Daoist magic of the Heavenspan Dharma Eye. With one glance, one could exercise control over anything and everything.

“That’s just like the Human Controlling Grand Magic I’ve been working on!!” Even though the technique wasn’t useful past Foundation Establishment, he immediately decided that the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation was for him!



Time passed. Bai Xiaochun didn't eat or sleep. He remained in the stone chamber, seeking enlightenment of the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation. After a month, he hadn't succeeded, but had the technique imprinted on his mind. Reluctantly, he decided to leave.

"If I want to cultivate it properly, I'll need to get a drop of water from the Heavenspan River!" Gritting his teeth, he pulled out his authentication device and vanished from the stone chamber. When he appeared, he was in the cave that was the entrance of the Ancestral Darktunnel. Without a moment's hesitation, he left.

Although he didn't notice it, in the moment of his departure, several streams of divine will were there, trembling in shock and anticipation.

During the following days, Bai Xiaochun remained on the bank of the Heavenspan River below Mount Daoseed. He sat there cross-legged, watching the golden water rush past. He could sense the spiritual power in that water, which emanated terrifying fluctuations as it rumbled past. Occasionally, his hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture as he attempted to extract a drop of the water for himself.

Never once did he succeed, though. No matter what he did, he couldn't affect the water at all. The water was clearly so terrifyingly powerful that if any of it touched him, his fleshly body would melt instantly.

A few more days passed, but he never met with success. After a while, he decided to go consult his Elder Brother the sect leader. He left with a jade bottle that contained a drop of water from the Heavenspan River. Every so often, the patriarchs of the sect would collect some of the water through various means, which would be used as a reward for Foundation Establishment cultivators, who could use the water for various purposes.

It was only after speaking with his Elder Brother that Bai Xiaochun came to realize that Heavenspan River water was a critical ingredient to cultivation in the Foundation Establishment stage. He wasn't the only person who needed such water; all of the legacies required water from the Heavenspan River.

The Spirit Stream Sect's legacies were rather mixed. There were legacies regarding beasts, swords, and spirit enhancement. Actually, the Blood Stream Sect, Profound Stream Sect, and Pill Stream Sect were all different in various ways, but also used Heavenspan River water. For example, the Blood Stream Sect could use it to make spirit blood. The cultivators of the Profound Stream Sect used it to make second spirit bodies for themselves, or to forge weapons. The Pill Stream Sect, of course, focused on pill concocting.

In the final analysis, however, all of the legacies just used a bit of the water temporarily. As for Bai Xiaochun's technique, the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation, it was far more domineering. It didn't just use it temporarily, it plundered it permanently!

The difference between borrowing and taking was like the difference between heaven and earth!

# Chapter 177: Heavenspan Dharma Eye!

---

Instead of taking the jade bottle back to his immortal's cave, he spent a moment of thought before deciding to take advantage of his access to the arcane pocket realm, which he had earned during the Chosen battles.

In the arcane pocket realm, he could seek enlightenment of secret magics, as well as his own personal techniques. There was something profound and mysterious about the arcane pocket realm that made enlightenment much easier, although Bai Xiaochun didn't quite understand the mechanics of it all.

In the Qi Condensation stage, techniques were somewhat limited, so it was best to wait until Foundation Establishment to go into the arcane pocket realm. Furthermore, no one would dare to state with utmost certainty that they would be able to reach the Gold Core stage. Even Bai Xiaochun with his Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment had, at best, a high likelihood of succeeding.

Therefore, it wasn't very practical to wait until the Gold Core stage.

The entrance to the arcane pocket realm was in a secret location on Mount Daoseed. When Bai Xiaochun handed the jade slip to the prime elder in charge of the entrance, the white-haired old man looked at him with a profound gaze.

Bai Xiaochun felt incredible pressure accompanying that gaze, almost the same type of pressure he remembered feeling as a Qi

Condensation cultivator when a Foundation Establishment expert looked at him. He immediately put on his most charming front.

“You took first place in the Chosen battles,” the old man said. “That gets you one day of enlightenment. Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment gets you three days. Peak Lord Li Qinghou from Fragrant Cloud Peak previously accumulated two days of time, which he has passed on to you. The sect leader has also gifted you with two days.” Upon hearing these things, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide.

He had never been told that Li Qinghou and Zheng Yuandong had gifted him time in the arcane pocket realm. However, he hadn’t even been aware that there was a time limitation to begin with. A few days certainly didn’t seem like enough time to gain enlightenment.

“A total of eight days!” The old man’s right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and then he waved his finger at a nearby boulder. The boulder began to blur, and then rumbling sounds echoed out that caused Bai Xiaochun’s heart to tremble. Shockingly, the boulder transformed into a huge stone golem more than 30 meters tall. It threw his head back and howled, then reached out with both hands and began to rip the air apart.

An instant later, a huge fissure could be seen.

“What are you waiting for?!” the prime elder said. Although he spoke in a cool voice, it still echoed like thunder. Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, then clasped hands and bowed before flying toward the fissure and disappearing inside.

A moment later, the fissure closed up, and the stone golem transformed back into a boulder. Then the prime elder closed his eyes to meditate.

When Bai Xiaochun reappeared, he was in a strange world of complete grayness. As he looked around, he realized that he was standing in the exact spot he had been standing in moments before.

He could see the boulder, although the primer elder was gone. The entire Spirit Stream Sect was visible around him, but he couldn't sense even a trace of life within it. After a moment, he flew up into the air to get a better look around.

"This...." The Spirit Stream Sect looked exactly the same as he remembered. However, not a single person could be seen in any of the buildings.

The desolate feeling he got caused Bai Xiaochun to grow very nervous. Then he looked over and realized that the Heavenspan River was completely dried up, and his scalp began to tingle.

"What kind of arcane pocket realm is this?" He felt extremely uneasy, although he wasn't exactly sure why. With that, he headed to the very peak of Mount Daoseed, a place where he would normally never be able to go.

From that vantage point, he could look out on the entire world around him. However, everything was filled with gray mist,

making it difficult to see very far.

“I don’t even want to think about what this means. I guess I’ll just see if it’s really easier to gain enlightenment of techniques here.” Suppressing his uneasy feeling, he sat down cross-legged, closed his eyes, and visualized the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation.

A moment later, his eyes snapped open, and they shone with delight. For some reason, there were many aspects to cultivation that he found confusing in the outside world, but suddenly made sense here. For some reason, it was as if his mind had expanded, and any thought that passed through his head was instantly made a reality!

It was very strange. It was almost as if all he had to do was imagine some new world, and that world would appear right in front of him. He almost couldn’t believe it.

Excitedly closing his eyes again, he immersed himself in seeing enlightenment of the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation.

Time passed. Soon, night fell. Before Bai Xiaochun knew it, a second day had come and gone. Then a third.

Deep in the night of the third day, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes opened, and they shone with the glow of enlightenment. In fact, if you looked closely, you would be able to see a magical symbol flickering deep in each pupil.

“The most difficult part of the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation is the first step,” he murmured. “Water from the spirit river descends like a meteor falling into the mortal world. Flesh and blood become threads that hold up the stars. The body becomes the heavens, and the stars exist inside of it, never to descend!” He waved his right hand, causing a jade bottle to fly out of his bag of holding.

The bottle opened, and a drop of golden water from the Heavenspan River floated out, the only bit of color to exist in the world of gray that surrounded him.

He looked hesitantly at the drop of water for a moment, then gritted his teeth.

“Anything to be able to live forever! Anything to be able to go to the Heavenspan Sea!” He took a deep breath, and the drop of golden river water shot toward his forehead.

As soon as it made contact with his skin, intense pain exploded out. His flesh and blood felt like they were melting, and he shivered violently. Gritting his teeth, he rotated his cultivation base and drew upon all nine of his spiritual seas, using the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation to attempt to absorb the power of the water.

Rumbling sounds filled his ears, and the golden liquid slowly merged into his forehead. After an indeterminable period of time, he let out a powerful roar. Inside of him, the golden liquid completely ignored his qi passageways, flesh, and blood as it sank down inside of him.

That was water from the spirit river descends like a meteor falling into the mortal world.

As it passed through him, all of his qi passageways, flesh and blood melted, and even his internal organs were injured. His bones screamed in pain, causing his face to turn ashen, and blood to ooze out of his mouth.

And yet, he simply gritted his teeth, ignoring his melting and destroyed qi passageways, flesh and blood. Instead, he sent internal spiritual energy coursing through them, spreading out into his body to wrap like threads around the golden river water. This was none other than flesh and blood become threads that hold up the stars.

Most of the threads were destroyed, but as they continued to spread out, many of them managed to wrap madly around the golden river water.

As the golden river water reached Bai Xiaochun's dantian region, his eyes suddenly glittered.

“The body becomes the heavens, and the stars exist inside of it, never to descend!”

Rumbling sounds could be heard as his nine spiritual seas erupted with the power of nine Tideflows, which battered against the golden liquid as if to destroy it. However, the liquid quickly pierced into the ninth spiritual sea, then the eighth, and the



seventh....

As that happened, the spiritual seas rapidly transformed into innumerable spirit threads which wrapped around the golden river water.

After piercing through eight of the spiritual seas, the golden liquid was completely bound by the spirit threads, whereupon it slowly ground to a halt, to hang above the first spiritual sea!

In that moment, it began to emanate boundless golden light which exploded out to fill Bai Xiaochun's entire body. Everywhere it went, it healed what it passed over, including his spiritual seas, qi passageways, flesh and blood, bones, and everything else. At the same time, everything began to transform.

Bai Xiaochun's aura erupted out, and although it was still in the early Foundation Establishment stage, it was completely different than before. Before, he had seemed impressive from the outside, but the truth was that his Foundation Establishment power was in a state of disorder, like an army without a general. But now, after having gained enlightenment of the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation, that general had appeared, and all of his spiritual power was now in unison. As such, his battle prowess was now completely different than before.

His eyes opened, and the magical symbols in his pupils were even clearer than before. Gradually, they faded away, and at the same time, the golden liquid inside of him began to merge into his first spiritual sea.

At some point in the future, when the golden liquid was fully and completely absorbed, he would have successfully completed cultivating the first level of the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation.

It was at this point that splitting pain suddenly radiated from Bai Xiaochun's forehead. There was also an itching sensation, as an eye gradually formed in that very position, an eye that seemed to be on the verge of opening.

It was none other than his Heavenspan Dharma Eye!

"It worked!" he exclaimed jubilantly. He reached up to rub his forehead, and the itchiness grew more pronounced. However, he wasn't alarmed, but rather, overjoyed.

"Hahaha!" he laughed, nearly jumping up and down. "From now on I'm going to have three eyes. Even just saying it sounds awesome!" Then he looked off into the distance and took a deep breath.

"It's still growing, but I could probably test it out a bit." After a moment of hesitation, he closed his eyes. His first spiritual sea then began to churn, and the drop of golden river water emanated flickering golden light, which streamed through his qi passageways to converge on his forehead.

In that moment, the rapidly stabilizing crack which had just appeared suddenly opened, and a violet eye appeared. Instantly, his gaze pierced through mists to see what was beyond.

A tremor ran through him as he realized that beyond the mists were not lands, but rather, an almost completely dried-up sea. The Spirit Stream Sect was a floating island in the air, and further off in the distance were countless other islands!

Bolts of lightning crackled within the sea and between the various islands.

He wanted to examine the scene further, but the pain in his forehead was too great. Blood began to ooze down, and the fissure on his forehead closed. With that, his two eyes snapped open, and a tremor ran through him. His spiritual power had been drained by more than half.

“What kind of arcane pocket realm is this?” he thought, panting in astonishment.

# Chapter 178: So Little Mask, You Want To Play Hide-And-Seek With Lord Bai?

---

Bai Xiaochun found it completely bizarre, and simply couldn't imagine what type of place he was in.

After a while, he decided to stop thinking about the mists and what lay beyond. Taking a deep breath, he slowly calmed down.

“I guess it doesn't matter. One thing's for sure: my speed of enlightenment here is incredible. I can really benefit a lot.” Shaking his head, he completely stilled the shock within him.

“No wonder they allocate time in here by the day. Even allocating it by the hour would make sense. Every day here counts as an opportunity for major gains by any cultivator.” All of a sudden, he felt overtaken by a sense of urgency. He had spent three days on the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation, which meant he had five days left.

“I can't waste any time!” He quickly pulled a jade slip out of his bag of holding and poured some spiritual power into it. Soon, a mnemonic appeared in his mind.

“Undying Heavenly King!” he said, eyes shining with excitement. That jade slip had been given to him years ago by the man known as the gravekeeper. It was the second volume of the Undying Codex! The Undying Heavenly King!

In the first volume of the Undying Codex, one cultivated the power of the skin, which was called the Undying Skin. The second volume focused on fleshly body power, and was called the Undying Heavenly King!

Similar to the Undying Skin, the Undying Heavenly King was divided into four levels. However, they were not divided into iron, bronze, silver, and gold. Instead, they were four fleshly body types. The first level was the ten mammoths Berserk Ghost Body. The second was the ten ghosts Heavenly Demon Body. The third level was the ten demons Asura Body. The final level was the Undying Heavenly King Body!

Each of those four fleshly body types was more powerful than the one before it, with the most powerful being the Undying Heavenly King Body. It was actually thousands of times more powerful than the first level, the Berserk Ghost Body!

Bai Xiaochun had actually known about this some time ago, but because he had never mastered the Undying Skin, he had been unable to proceed with the higher levels of cultivation. Now that he was examining it again, the Undying Heavenly King was completely shocking.

“The so-called mammoths referenced in the ten mammoths Berserk Ghost Body were not ordinary creatures. They were gargantuan mammoths from primeval times, who emanated incredible pressure all around them. Even their fleshly body strength alone was comparable to an early Foundation Establishment cultivator!

“The mammoth power from the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture is similar. After reaching Foundation Establishment, my fleshly body power is actually similar to one of those gigantic mammoths.

“As for the berserk ghost, the Undying Heavenly King information says that in the legends, there was a terrifying entity that could rip mammoths to shreds. It was actually a ghost-like beast with a terrifying fleshly body!” Considering the current level of his cultivation base, he found the information about the Undying Heavenly King even more shocking than before.

“Basically, if I cultivate the first level of the Undying Heavenly King, then in the end, my fleshly body power will be ten times what it is now, which will be the power of a single ghost of the second level. The power of ten such berserk ghosts will put me at the level of the heavenly demon.

“According to the information, heavenly demons were also legendary creatures with terrifying fleshly body power, who hunted and consumed berserk ghosts!

“Asuras have ten times the power of heavenly demons, and according to the legends, would easily crush heavenly demons. I guess that means that the Undying Heavenly King has ten times the power of an asura?”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were shining brightly. He was already deeply familiar with the benefits of his Undying Skin, and as such, was even more excited about the Undying Heavenly King. He could already imagine what it would be like one day to combine the

power of the Undying Heavenly King with the Undying Gold Skin. Although he wouldn't literally be undying, he would definitely be very difficult to kill!

“This volume of the Undying Heavenly King can lead to explosive fleshly body growth! If I cultivate it successfully, it would be hard to find a Foundation Establishment cultivator under heaven who could kill me!” With that, he quickly closed his eyes and began to work on the first level of the Undying Heavenly King.

It was not an easy task, and the difficulty lay in the vast amount of vital energy that was required. The requirements of the first volume of the Undying Codex were like nothing compared to this. After cultivating it for a bit, Bai Xiaochun was already looking withered, and he quickly stopped.

“What a terrifying waste of vital energy. If you're not careful, you'll turn yourself into human jerky....” When he thought of what he would look like as a slab of human jerky, he couldn't help but shiver in fear. However, he wasn't willing to give up. That was especially true because of the divine ability he would have access to if he successfully cultivated the first level.

“The Mountain Shaking Bash....” he thought, taking a deep breath. He immediately decided that after leaving the arcane pocket realm, he would concoct pills and even stock up on precious materials that could replenish vital energy. Regardless of how difficult it was, he had to cultivate the Undying Heavenly King.

After some brief calculations, he realized he had three days left. Without any further hesitation, he took the Protomagnetic Wings

off of his back and examined them closely. In the very middle of the wings was a pearl, which he'd acquired from the north bank in trade for the pill formula for the Aphrodisiac Pill. It was known as the Protomagnetic Pearl.

According to the peak lord from Irispetal Peak, if it was his destiny, he might be able to gain enlightenment of a divine ability that had to do with gravitational repulsion.

Although he had looked into the matter before, he had never made much headway. With three days left in this place, he decided that maybe it was a good time to take another look.

Time flew by, and before he knew it, there were only about eight hours of time left in the arcane pocket realm. However, he didn't give up. Even though he hadn't gained complete enlightenment of the powers of gravity and repulsion, he did have a much deeper understanding of the magnetic powers of the pearl.

Now he was able to unleash a strange power that contained both pulling and pushing forces, which, when combined, caused the air to distort into the form of a pearl.

The pearl seemed illusory, but affected the air around it, causing it to twist and distort. When Bai Xiaochun poured spiritual power into it, the power vanished like a rock thrown into the deep sea. However, as soon as he ceased the flow, the power which he had poured into the crystal rumbled back out. Shocked, he realized that the pearl apparently maintained balance in the form of a cycle, making it a vessel of sorts.



Even still, he was unable to unleash the powers of gravity and repulsion. If he managed to succeed in the future, he would finally be able to make contact with true protomagnetic power.

“What a pity. If I could only spend some more time in here, I would definitely be able to unravel the mystery.” Sighing, he put the wings back, and then used the remaining eight hours working on his Waterswamp Kingdom.

When the eight hours were up, the air around him began to ripple, and before he could do anything further, everything around him collapsed. Rumbling sounds echoed out as a vortex formed, which sucked Bai Xiaochun inside.

After vanishing, he reappeared back on Mount Daoseed, outside the entrance of the arcane pocket realm. He immediately felt disoriented. Inside the arcane pocket realm, his mind had been unprecedentedly clear. His thoughts seemed to roam free without restraint. But now he was back to normal, and it felt almost like he had been submerged in water. He felt very muddleheaded.

The prime elder opened his eyes and looked at him, and was immediately shaken. Bai Xiaochun seemed completely different than he had eight days ago. All aspects of his energy seemed far stronger than before.

The old man nodded in admiration, then said, “People usually have a hard time adjusting after their first time in the arcane pocket realm. Go meditate for a few days and you’ll be fine.”

With that, he closed his eyes.

It took Bai Xiaochun a moment to even recover to the point where he could move. Ashen-faced, he clasped hands and bowed to the prime elder, then left.

After returning to his immortal's cave, he sat down next to the lake, working at readjusting himself, and simultaneously recalling his experiences in the pocket realm. Finally, he sighed.

“If only I could have sought enlightenment in there for a few more days. Cultivating in there is pure joy. Just what kind of place is it? It's so weird.” He shook his head. It was actually possible to pay merit points to enter the arcane pocket realm, but with Bai Xiaochun's current savings, he could only afford a few hours.

Considering how uncomfortable he felt, it was impossible to clear his mind enough to practice cultivation. After some thought, he unstrapped his bag of holding.

It was filled with all sorts of miscellaneous items, including many things that he'd acquired in the Fallen Sword World. Up to this point, he hadn't taken the time to organize them all. Upon opening it up, he saw countless objects, including spirit stones and even some magical items.

After organizing everything, he found he had a dozen or so bottles and cases, some of which contained medicinal pills, and some of which held items he wasn't familiar with. The other sects

all had different areas of specialty, so it made sense that his understanding of the items gained from them would be limited.

“Is this a spirit medicine from the Pill Stream Sect? The Pill Stream Sect’s pill concocting methods seem really interesting....

“This is from the Profound Stream Sect, right? It looks like a fingernail!

“What’s this thing? It’s so sticky....” Shaking his head, he moved on to a blood-colored jade box. As soon as he opened the box, a burst of fiery power exploded out.

At first, he wasn’t very impressed, but then he looked a bit closer, and his eyes went wide. Panting, he looked even closer at the small tongue of fire inside the jade box.

That fire was no ordinary fire, but rather, was coming out of an object located at the bottom of the box, a type of immortal grass with four different colors on its leaves. Because of the four colors on its leaves, the fire coming off of the plant itself had four different colors, making it look very strange.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and his heart began to pound. After some closer examination, he confirmed his original assumption. “Four-leaved immortal grass! A rare item that creates four-colored flame!!”

“This is a variation that only appears once in 100,000 stalks of

three-leaved immortal grass. Four-leaved immortal grass can create four-colored flame....” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes began to shine. How could he ever have imagined that his bag of holding would contain an item like this?

To the disciples of the other three sects, it might just be an object useful for concocting medicine or practicing cultivation. But to Bai Xiaochun, it was like a precious treasure.

He hadn’t used his turtle-wok for quite awhile, not because he didn’t want to, but because fuel for four-colored flames was very rare in the sect, and he hadn’t been able to acquire any.

Even as he looked at the four-leaved immortal grass, he suddenly remembered something that he had acquired from one of the disciples from the Blood Stream Sect. Back in the Fallen Sword World, so many disciples had besieged him because of the heavenstring energy that he couldn’t remember them all clearly. However, there was one disciple who had made somewhat of an impression; after being killed, he had seemingly transformed into a mask and then tried to flee.

“Yeah, I remember him!” Bai Xiaochun thought, eyes flashing. He clearly remembered grabbing the mask and trying to crush it, but being unable to do so. In his hurry, he’d simply sealed it and tossed it into his bag of holding.

However, after searching for quite some time, he was shocked to realize that the mask was nowhere to be found.

“Impossible!” Ignoring the discomfort he felt from having just returned from the pocket realm, he drew upon the power of his cultivation base to once again search, this time even more thoroughly.

“There’s no way I’m misremembering this. I definitely threw it into my bag of holding. That mask must be some sort of magical treasure that’s actually trying to hide from me!” His eyes began to shine with intrigue.

Sticking his chin up, he said, “How dare you try to play hide-and-seek with Lord Bai, you little mask. Lord Bai can reduce you to ash with the snap of a finger!”

# Chapter 179: I'll Tell You A Secret

---

The interior of his bag of holding was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. There wasn't a single reply from inside. Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he let out a threatening roar. And yet, nothing moved inside the bag.

Furious, he sealed it. Then, he chuckled coldly and closed his eyes to meditate. A few days later, after he'd fully recovered, he rotated his cultivation base and sent golden light streaming toward the Heavenspan Dharma Eye on his forehead.

"Alright little mask, let's see if you can hide from me this time!" With a cold snort, he confirmed that he could force open his Heavenspan Dharma Eye again. With that, he unsealed his bag of holding, and then opened his third eye just a crack. A violet eye could just barely be seen as he looked into the bag of holding.

In that instant, his mind trembled, and everything vanished. His bag of holding and everything else in it turned transparent, revealing a crumpled up mask off in the corner.

It had concealed itself in the lining of the bag of holding, slowly merging into the side. Clearly, if it had been given enough time, it would have been able to fully merge into the material of the bag of holding, then secretly escape out the other side.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun caught sight of it with his third eye, the mask trembled and unleashed a blinding light as it attempted to break out of the bag of holding. Before it could though, Bai

Xiaochun snorted coldly, and sent spiritual power streaming into the bag of holding to grab onto the mask.

After dragging it out from within the lining of the bag, he pulled it out and held it in his hand to examine it with his third eye. Strangely, only his third eye could see it. His other senses, including his normal eyes, couldn't detect its existence at all.

“Weird,” he thought. “How come I could see it back in the Fallen Sword World?” He couldn't sustain the use of his third eye for too long, so after closing it, he drew upon his nine spiritual seas, unleashing some Heaven-Dao aura. Immediately, the air above his palm began to distort, and soon, the mask became visible in front of him.

It was now a flesh-colored mask!

This was the mask he had tried to crush back in the Fallen Sword World. It seemed as delicate as the wings of a cicada, and also contained some strange aura that Bai Xiaochun couldn't clearly analyze. “Could it be cultivated using the waters of the Heavenspan River?”.

It was an aura that came from whatever material the mask had been constructed from, and Bai Xiaochun found it quite shocking. Then he thought back to how the soul of that Blood Stream Sect disciple entered the mask and then tried to flee.

“I know you're in there!” he growled. “Show your face to Lord Bai!” However, there was no reaction from the mask. Eyes shining

with viciousness, he tried to crush the mask, and yet no matter how much power he exerted, nothing happened.

“Not gonna come out? You really think I have no way of dealing with you?” With that, he shot down the mountain to the bank of the Heavenspan River, where he cocked his hand back, as if to throw the mask in the water.

That river water was the only thing Bai Xiaochun could think of that could melt just about anything. However, before he could actually throw the mask, it trembled and suddenly cried out, “Senior, let me say something!”

“Ah, so you can talk now, huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, eyes gleaming ferociously. “Get out of that mask and tell me who you are!”

A mist suddenly flowed out from the crumpled up mask, which rapidly took shape into a tiny person. Although he didn’t look exactly like the person he had killed in the Fallen Sword World, he looked similar. Looking completely terrified, and trembling physically, he clasped hands and bowed to Bai Xiaochun.

“Please grace me with your favor, Senior,” he blubbered. “Your humble servant made a mistake, I know it. I’m an Inner Sect disciple from the Blood Stream Sect. My name is Nightcrypt....” After the catastrophe of the Fallen Sword World, he had remained in Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding. His plan had been to slowly make his escape, but before he could, Bai Xiaochun had found him.



Originally, he hadn't been too worried, assuming that Bai Xiaochun wouldn't be able to hurt him. He had never imagined that he would threaten to melt him in the Heavenspan River.

The spiritual power of the waters of the Heavenspan River was difficult to put into words, and even some of the most powerful defensive treasures could be destroyed by it.

When Bai Xiaochun heard the name '[Nightcrypt](#)', he was a bit taken aback, and even felt a bit nervous. The name really was very intimidating. Whether the meaning of the name meant burying people at night, or entombing the night itself, it definitely felt profoundly murderous.

Generally speaking, I transliterate the names of characters, and translate Daoist names or nicknames. For Nightcrypt, I'm making a bit of an exception. This is supposed to be his actual name, not a Daoist name. So if I transliterated it, it would be Ye Zang. However, it's a completely ridiculous name in Chinese, the kind of name nobody would have in real life. It's supposed to sound cool/creepy/badass, except, sort of "made up" a.k.a. not a real name. To keep the outrageous flavor of the name, I'm going to translate it out instead of transliterating it. P.S. My apologies if anyone in the audience is actually named Nightcrypt, and is offended by me calling it a ridiculous name.

Looking askance at the trembling soul, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. "Well, your name could use some work. Doesn't sound very good, you know. Definitely not as good as mine."

Nightcrypt gaped for a moment, the subserviently voiced his agreement. However, he didn't dare to say anything else. The

truth was he was feeling very sorry for himself. The Blood Stream Sect had never paid much attention to him, and he had worked very hard to reach the great circle of Qi Condensation.

Originally, he hadn't qualified to enter the Fallen Sword Abyss. The truth was that he had studied a strange mix of things in the Blood Stream Sect. In addition to a bit of knowledge of medicine concocting, he had also studied the sect's divination magic. He would often divine his own future, and although the results weren't always accurate, they had provided some benefits to his cultivation.

Before the Fallen Sword Abyss was opened, his divination had revealed that he would come across some incredible good fortune if he went along.

Although he didn't quite believe it at first, he got the same results after numerous divinations. Finally, he gritted his teeth and paid a huge price, even undergoing significant humiliation, to get himself a spot. Who would ever have thought that, not only did he not get any good fortune, he would end up the captive of the brutal Bai Xiaochun.

“Lord Bai,” he said, bowing continuously, “considering your incredible might, sir, why don't you just let me go? I can be a spy for you! I'll go back to the Blood Stream Sect and report back to you here at the Spirit Stream Sect. I-I-I can even swear an oath!”

Bai Xiaochun looked over at him, then snorted coldly.

“Spy? Presumably this is your true appearance, right? The Nightcrypt I killed is a different person than you! I can’t believe you’re trying to trick me! Bai Xiaochun hates it when people try to trick him! Prepare to die!” Glaring as fiercely as possible, he knelt down and prepared to drop the mask into the river.

A wave rolled by that seemed just about to hit Nightcrypt, who screamed and trembled in fear. The sensation of imminent death he was experiencing surpassed anything he had felt in his life. Then he thought about all the humiliation he had endured in the sect, and he felt like crying.

“Don’t kill me! I’ll tell you a huge secret!!”

Bai Xiaochun sneered, even more distrustful than before. With that, he loosened his grip, and the mask began to fall.

Nightcrypt was scared out of his mind as the waters of the river rushed up toward him. “No! I’m serious about this secret! It has to do with eternal indestructibility!!”

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun. As far as he was concerned, the terms ‘eternal’ and ‘indestructible’ were essentially synonymous of ‘undying’ and ‘live forever.’ Without a moment of hesitation, his hand shot out with lightning-like speed to grab the mask.

“You’d better not try to trick me,” he said gravely. “You already know how much I hate it when people try to trick me!”

“I’m telling the truth,” Nightcrypt gushed. “There’s a big secret about the Blood Stream Sect. They have a relic of eternity! Nobody else knows about it except me. Not even the patriarchs of the Blood Stream Sect are aware that such a heaven-defying object is hidden inside of their sect!!

“According to the legends, whoever gets that relic and unlocks it will be able to grasp the secrets of being eternally indestructible!!

“I’m not tricking you. I’m completely and utterly serious about this!!” From what Nightcrypt could tell, Bai Xiaochun was a very moody person, which was the most terrifying type of person there was.

Glaring angrily, Bai Xiaochun prepared to throw the mask back into the river. “What a load of crap. The patriarchs of the sect don’t know about that thing, but you do?”

On the verge of tears, Nightcrypt finally blurted out everything. “I-I-I’m not really a disciple from the Blood Stream Sect. I’m an imposter....”

As imposter Nightcrypt continued to explain the details, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide. It turned out that this imposter was someone who the real Nightcrypt hadn’t even been aware of!

He had started out as rogue cultivator in the third level of Qi Condensation, with relatively good latent talent. After being chased down by an enemy, he was on the verge of being killed when an enigmatic savior from a mysterious sect appeared. His

savior had been in a bit of a rush, so after a moment of thought, gave him a mask and told him to find an Outer Sect disciple in the Blood Stream Sect named Nightcrypt. His mission was to take his place and carry out a certain task. The savior had even hexed the imposter's soul.

The real Nightcrypt was actually dead by now. However, he had occupied a relatively stable position in the Blood Stream Sect. One of his ancestors had performed a great service for the Blood Stream Sect, and because of that, Nightcrypt had been guaranteed a place in the Inner Sect.

The imposter's mysterious savior had visited him a second time to explain further details of his mission, which was to secretly acquire the relic of eternal indestructibility. His savior had described its appearance, and even told him where it was located. Apparently, there was a huge door guarding the way, the key to which was a unique medicinal pill.

The pill wasn't difficult to concoct; even an ordinary apothecary could do it. Unfortunately, no matter who concocted it, the success rate would be fifty-fifty. Furthermore, the ingredients were very rare. Collecting them all would be a very difficult task.

Thankfully, his mysterious savior's sect was very rich, and had already collected most of the ingredients. The only thing lacking was some beastbirth blood.

After replacing Nightcrypt and becoming a Blood Stream Sect disciple, everything went smoothly at first. He soon became an Inner Sect disciple, but quickly came to find that he had difficulty

cultivating the techniques of the Blood Stream Sect. Although he had good latent talent, he wasn't suited for blood cultivation. This problem grew worse and worse until he got stuck in the eighth level of Qi Condensation.

Gradually, the sect lost interest in him, and even his mysterious savior didn't provide any help. For several miserable years, he had continued to cultivate alone in painstaking fashion....

His mysterious savior's sect was a very, very long way away from the Blood Stream Sect, and there were other things that made it difficult to go back and forth between the two. Furthermore, he wasn't able to directly plunder the relic of eternal indestructibility himself. Because of that, he only appeared three times, and those three times had all been by means of a projection, and apparently came at great cost.

The first time was when he arranged for Nightcrypt's soul replacement. The second time was when imposter Nightcrypt became an Inner Sect disciple. The fanfare surrounding that event didn't seem to please his mysterious savior, but didn't stop him from explaining the details of the relic of eternal indestructibility. That was also when he gave imposter Nightcrypt the ingredients to concoct the medicinal pill, and explained that his mysterious sect would continue to search for the final ingredient.

The third time he appeared was right before imposter Nightcrypt entered the Fallen Sword World. He'd explained that if he couldn't reach Foundation Establishment, that he would have to give up the mask and abandon his spy work.

Imposter Nightcrypt had been left with no choice but to rely on his divination skills to illuminate the correct path ahead. Everything after that was history....

“Is that sect full of idiots?” Bai Xiaochun blurted. “Why would they possibly pick you to be their spy? Furthermore, how could the Blood Stream Sect never have suspected you?!” In his opinion, either Nightcrypt was lying, or the mysterious sect was full of fools. Of course, perhaps there was some other factor that Bai Xiaochun was unaware of, something that gave the mysterious sect no other choice than to rely on the Nightcrypt soul replacement plan.

# Chapter 180: Could It Be The Will Of The Heavens...?

---

There was another possibility, which was that, as Nightcrypt had said, the mysterious sect was too far away from the Blood Stream Sect, so far that even a projection was difficult to accomplish. That would explain their lack of both confidence and options, which led to their less than perfect decision.

Suspicious, Bai Xiaochun continued to pry Nightcrypt with questions, until even Nightcrypt seemed to be getting confused. Finally, Bai Xiaochun frowned, and then once again resorted to threatening to dunk him in the Heavenspan River. He then asked more questions, even down to the details of the formula to the pill that was needed to open the door. Slowly, he was coming to be convinced that Nightcrypt was telling the truth. Although his answers sometimes conflicted with each other, the overall bigger picture was consistent.

There even seemed to be certain things that Nightcrypt himself didn't understand. All he knew was that he was a spy, and that his soul had been bound with a restrictive spell. If he didn't follow his orders, he would die. He wasn't even sure what to do with the relic of eternal indestructibility if he managed to get his hands on it.

To Bai Xiaochun, it didn't make much sense that the mysterious sect would just hand the medicinal pill ingredients over to a stranger. The most likely explanation was that Nightcrypt's mysterious savior truly approved of his soul, although another possibility was that the sect really was too far away, and they had no other option than to hand over the ingredients when they



could.

Either way, it didn't seem logical. It almost seemed like the mysterious sect hadn't considered what to do after Nightcrypt acquired the relic of eternal indestructibility. Perhaps they didn't really care about the relic at all, and simply wanted him to open the door. Or was it that they didn't believe Nightcrypt to be capable of actually acquiring the relic after opening the door?

But if the latter were the case, why wouldn't they just select another spy...?

“What a weird sect. Why do I get the feeling that they're only going through the motions? It's almost like they want certain people to think that they're working hard at reaching some goal, but in reality, they don't care.” The more Bai Xiaochun thought about it, the more strange he found the whole scenario.

Another odd thing was that the Blood Stream Sect never got suspicious of Nightcrypt. Although, based on Nightcrypt's explanation, that was a question which could be answered.

“It's all thanks to this mask, huh....” he thought. He looked over the mask in more detail, and was shocked to find that he had no idea what it was made of. However, its aura was shocking, and no matter how he looked at it, it seemed like a precious treasure.

According to Nightcrypt, putting on the mask didn't just change your physical appearance. It actually transformed your flesh and blood. That transformation would reverse upon removing the

mask, but as long as you wore it, no one would ever be able to detect any clues that you were a different person. Your cultivation base fluctuations would be concealed, and according to the representative of the mysterious sect, no one under the Mahayana Realm would be able to see them. Unfortunately, Nightcrypt didn't know what the Mahayana Realm was....

Of course, Bai Xiaochun didn't know what the Mahayana Realm was either, although it sounded pretty incredible. Looking down at the imposter Nightcrypt there in the mask, he suddenly said, "Spiritwinter grass, waterink lily, cloud-dragon leaf, heavensieve root. What are the medicinal properties of those four medicinal plants?"

Imposter Nightcrypt gaped for a moment, then without even thinking about it started to rattle off the medicinal properties. As Bai Xiaochun listened, his frown deepened.

His answer wasn't complete, but it wasn't incorrect. Generally speaking, his description was accurate. The four medicinal plants Bai Xiaochun had asked about weren't selected randomly. Based on the answers imposter Nightcrypt gave, Bai Xiaochun was able to determine that he really could concoct medicine....

"So, he actually is capable of concocting the pill. He only has a rough foundation in the Dao of medicine, but it's enough to produce the door-opening pill."

Bai Xiaochun was really torn about what to think. However, his desire to acquire that relic of eternal indestructibility only continued to grow.

“If it was called anything else, I could have ignored it. Why did it have to be called eternally indestructible!?” He glared down at imposter Nightcrypt’s soul in the mask, who immediately began to tremble and plead for his life.

“I’m telling the truth. I swear it! I’ve told you everything. I didn’t leave anything out!” And he really was telling the truth.

“Fine, fine,” Bai Xiaochun said. “Hurry up and get out of that mask. I want to study it a bit!”

Imposter Nightcrypt hesitated, clearly not pleased with the idea of leaving the mask. However, as soon as he thought of how ferocious Bai Xiaochun had been in the Fallen Sword World, and how he had just about thrown the mask into the Heavenspan River, he shivered, gritted his teeth, and floated out into the open. After all, if Bai Xiaochun wanted to exterminate him, he could do so without the trouble of asking him to come out of the mask.

As soon as he was out in the open, Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve. Imposter Nightcrypt let out a shriek as he was thrown into a jade box, which then went into Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding. With that, Bai Xiaochun returned to his immortal’s cave to study the mask more.

The process took an entire month.

Bai Xiaochun barely ate or slept during that time. He was completely focused on studying the mask. He even performed a

few different tests. No matter what he did, he was unable to damage the mask in any way. At one point, he carefully dipped the mask into the waters of the Heavenspan River. Although he could tell that any soul inside of the mask would have been destroyed, the mask itself wasn't hurt at all. At one point, Bai Xiaochun suddenly wondered why the discarnate soul of imposter Nightcrypt, with a mere Qi Condensation cultivation base, would be able to survive after being killed in the Fallen Sword World. Presumably the answer had to do with the mask itself, which prevented his soul from dispersing.

He even bought some animals at the market and then put the mask on them. As soon as he did, the mask vanished, and the animals' faces turned into Nightcrypt's.

The result was terrifying to look at, but upon closer examination, Bai Xiaochun confirmed that the little animals weren't hurt at all. In fact, they didn't even seem to notice that anything had changed. It was almost as if they had always looked that way.

After removing the mask, they would return to normal. Bai Xiaochun kept the animals around a while, and performed even more tests. In the end, he confirmed that the mask didn't have any side-effects or harmful secrets. Still not completely convinced, he kept the animals under close observation.

The mask was truly a precious treasure, and Bai Xiaochun couldn't imagine why that mysterious sect would possibly have just given it to a random spy.

Eventually, he used his Heavenspan Dharma Eye to observe the

mask. Combined with his Heaven-Dao aura, he came to the conclusion that there was something eternal about the mask's aura.

It was as if this mask would exist for all eternity!

Bai Xiaochun was left in a state of near madness, with bloodshot eyes and disheveled hair. At the same time, an audacious speculation rose up in his mind.

“What if the true purpose of the mask isn't just to change one's appearance and cultivation base? What if an authentication device, the medicinal pill, and the mask itself are all needed to open that door!?”

“Perhaps the mysterious sect merely wanted to put on a show of trying to open the door and release the relic of eternal indestructibility. Perhaps the truth is that they don't want to do that.

“Therefore, they recruited a spy and gave him the mask, but intentionally withheld one of the medicine concocting ingredients. It would seem like they were doing their best, but the truth was that they didn't care. Because they were only putting on a show, they weren't too happy that imposter Nightcrypt made a bit of a splash in the beginning. Perhaps that even had something to do with why imposter Nightcrypt didn't do well at his blood cultivation, and had problems improving his cultivation base!”

Another reason why Bai Xiaochun was so torn about what to do

was that the missing ingredient to the medicinal pill was beastbirth blood. Beastbirth blood was blood that came from a creature born out of a Beastbirth Flower. Although most people would view beastbirth blood as something that didn't even exist, and was virtually impossible to acquire, Bai Xiaochun's own battle beast Bruiser had been born in just such a fashion....

As such, he already had everything he needed to concoct that pill, and thus, also had everything he needed to open the door.

After much thought, he finally sighed and put the mask away.

“Forget about it. All that other stuff doesn't really matter now. First I should see if I can actually concoct the door-opening pill. If I can, then the will of the Heavens will be revealed. If I can't, then that will be the end of the matter.” Gritting his teeth, he went over to the north bank to find Bruiser. After playing with him for a bit, he got a drop of blood, then gave him a huge pile of delicious medicinal pills to eat.

After returning to his immortal's cave, he began to concoct.

Considering that he could already concoct tier-3 spirit medicines, producing the simplistic door-opening pill was a simple task. However, he still spent plenty of time studying the pill formula, and came to be convinced that the success rate would only be fifty percent, no matter who concocted it.

The strange pill formula was another reason why Bai Xiaochun was interested in the relic of eternal indestructibility.

He settled his qi and cleared his mind, then pulled out the ingredients from imposter Nightcrypt's bag of holding. Most Blood Stream Sect disciples kept all of their belongings with them at all times, for safety purposes.

Then he followed the pill formula exactly, taking three days in his concocting. When he was finished, the pill furnace began to rumble, and white smoke billowed out of it. Unexpectedly, nine magical symbols could be seen within the white smoke. After the smoke dissipated, the same aura he had sensed on the mask emanated out from the pill furnace.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and opened the pill furnace, whereupon a medicinal pill emerged that could only be fully examined with a Heaven-Dao aura and nine spiritual seas!

"It's very similar to the mask...." Bai Xiaochun thought, frowning as he looked at it.

"Is this really the will of the Heavens?" He thought some more. "No. No way. The Blood Stream Sect is too dangerous.

"The cultivators there are all devils. They kill people without batting an eye. Way too ferocious....

"Song Que is from the Blood Stream Sect, and that guy hates me with all his guts.

“It’s a place where the law of the jungle prevails....” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t stop thinking about the terrors of the Blood Stream Sect, and it sent chills down his back. And yet, his thirst for the relic of eternal indestructibility wouldn’t go away. It was almost like he had a person on each shoulder arguing back and forth about what to do.

One of them was telling him to go the Blood Stream Sect, the other was telling him to stay away.

All he had to do was put on the mask, and he could become Nightcrypt. Considering the power of the mask, not even the Blood Stream Sect Patriarchs would notice that anything was amiss. As Nightcrypt, he would be perfectly safe.

Furthermore, he already had the door-opening pill. All he had to do was get to the location of the relic of eternal indestructibility, and it would be his. Then he would be one step closer to accomplishing his dreams.

However, all of that had to be done in the Blood Stream Sect, which was a savage place that completely differed from the Spirit Stream Sect.

“What should I do...?” he thought, scowling as he stared at the medicinal pill.



## Chapter 181: Uncrushable....

---

After thinking the matter over for some time, he finally sighed and said, “Nah, it’s not worth even thinking about it. Things are great here in the Spirit Stream Sect....” Suppressing the pain he felt in his heart, he put the medicinal pill away in his bag of holding.

If he left, he would miss the Spirit Stream Sect too much. Now that he was in Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, everyone from the patriarchs to the servants treated him with the warmth of family.

Most importantly, there were plenty of new Outer Sect disciples who didn’t know him very well. Nor had he spent sufficient time in public on the north bank. He would really be missing out on a lot if he left the sect now.

In the days to follow, Bai Xiaochun spent time every day practicing cultivation. However, when he wasn’t cultivating, he would clasp his hands behind his back and stroll through both the north and south banks, smiling like someone from the Senior generation.

He would often mysteriously appear in areas where the Outer Sect disciples gathered. At first, cries of excitement would fill the air, but soon, strange expressions would begin to appear on the faces of the Outer Sect disciples. Eventually, they realized that they were seeing Bai Xiaochun more than a dozen times every day.

It didn't matter what they were doing, they would often look up to find Bai Xiaochun standing there, a faint smile of praise on his face. Eventually, they grew numb to what was happening, and the strange expressions grew even more common.

The Outer Sect disciples weren't the only ones to experience such a thing. Inner Sect disciples and even the elders were all annoyed to find that Bai Xiaochun, instead of tending to important affairs, would often stroll around and wait to be called Sect Uncle Bai. It was just like what had happened years ago.

Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun was much more restrained than he had been before. After once again experiencing the sensation of being the center of attention, he decided to stay in his immortal's cave on Mount Daoseed and concoct medicine.

“To cultivate the Undying Heavenly King, I need vital energy. Therefore, I need to concoct a tier-4 medicinal pill!” Bai Xiaochun's grand aspiration of becoming a master apothecary was what kept him so focused on medicine concocting.

Furthermore, he had never forgotten what Li Qinghou had told him, that after he reached Foundation Establishment, he should once again try to perfect his Lightning Detox Grand Magic. In the following days, lightning and thunder became common on Mount Daoseed, much to the astonishment of the Foundation Establishment elders there.

Disciples from the other mountain peaks saw the countless bolts of lightning descending upon the mountain, and were also shocked. People began to ask around, and before long, stories

about Bai Xiaochun's previous antics began to spread again. Soon, everyone was talking about it, leading to gasps and expressions of shock.

“Sect Uncle Bai did something like that? I don't believe it!”

“Heavens, did that really happen?”

Many of the disciples who weren't familiar with Bai Xiaochun had a hard time believing the stories. However, the frequency of the lightning didn't reduce by even a little bit. In fact, it increased. At the same time, black smoke began to rise from Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, and before long, the legendary acid rain began to fall.

Acid rain ran in rivulets down almost half of Mount Daozong. Of course, Bai Xiaochun was concocting tier-4 medicinal pills, to which tier-3 pills couldn't even compare. Soon, the area affected by the acid rain grew, reaching both the south and north banks. Eventually, all seven of the mountain peaks were affected.

A nightmare had descended once again. Countless disciples looked around in shock as their garments slowly dissolved.

“Bai Xiaochun is concocting pills again!!”

“Can't he just let people live in peace!?!?!?” The south bank had already gone through something like this before, so as soon as they realized the acid rain was coming, there was a bit of an uproar, but

nothing too dramatic.

However, the people from the north bank had never experienced anything quite like it. Soon, howls of rage rose up, and the north bank mountain peaks began to go mad.

“What’s going on!? What’s happening!?”

“Heavens! I can’t believe acid rain is falling! Wait a second, didn’t I hear a story recently about acid rain...?”

Screams and howls filled the north bank as the disciples there descended into madness. The four peak lords and the elders were also furious, and soon found that the culprit was none other than Bai Xiaochun!

Before Bai Xiaochun reached Foundation Establishment, the disciples of both banks would most surely have formed a mob to go pelt him with stones.

But now, all they could do was exchange dismayed glances. Despite their rage, Bai Xiaochun was not the same Bai Xiaochun that he had been before. He was now a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment expert, legacy echelon-designate, and a Foundation Establishment elder. A person like that was not someone who ordinary disciples could casually provoke. Even the elders could only stew in their frustration. As for the peak lords, they knew how much the prime elders valued Bai Xiaochun, and thus, could do nothing other than go to the sect leader and hope that he would see reason.

When Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong heard their complaints, he smiled wryly. After all, the legacy echelon-designate was someone very important. Sadly, Li Qinghou had already gone into secluded meditation, otherwise he might have been able to set Bai Xiaochun straight.

Zheng Yuandong tried to persuade Bai Xiaochun that there was more to life than cultivation, and that he should go out of the sect to get some experience in life. After all, without tempering, not even immortal steel could be forged into an immortal sword.

He even explained that as long as he stayed in the Eastwood Continent, he would never be in much danger, but would still be able to gain experience.

However, Bai Xiaochun merely shook his head and said that he really enjoyed life in the sect.

With that, he immersed himself in his research, and the same madness that had once gripped the south bank soon began to spread through the entire sect. However, just when it reached a boiling point, Bai Xiaochun suddenly stopped concocting pills.

There he sat in his immortal's cave, sighing. His efforts at tier-4 medicinal pills were all failures. No matter how he persisted, problems always cropped up.

“Maybe my skill in the Dao of medicine is too low. Trying to force the matter now won't do any good. If I want to concoct tier-4

medicinal pills, I have to improve my skill in the Dao of medicine!” Feeling enlightened, he went to visit Li Qinghou, but unfortunately, Li Qinghou was still trying to reach the Gold Core stage, and couldn’t emerge from secluded meditation.

Bai Xiaochun took out the Frigid School Medicine Manual, but no matter how he examined it, it didn’t make sense. It was as if he could understand the characters themselves, but the words and sentences they formed were completely unintelligible.

“If my skill in the Dao of medicine could be considered low-level, then the Frigid School Medicine Manual must be high-level. I’m missing some fundamental understanding regarding the Dao of medicine.” Although Bai Xiaochun was left scowling, the disciples of both the south and north banks, the elders and peak lords and the Foundation Establishment elders on Mount Daoseed were all sighing in relief.

As usual, they had underestimated Bai Xiaochun....

For the moment, he couldn’t work on tier-4 spirit medicine, but he could cultivate the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation. Furthermore, at a certain point, the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation, in combination with the protomagnetic powers of gravity and repulsion, delivered a burst of inspiration regarding his dream technique: the Human Controlling Grand Magic.

“I’m such an idiot!

“The Human Controlling Grand Magic doesn’t actually need to

directly control the opponent! If I figured out a way to control their clothing, I could control the movements of their body!

“Furthermore, I could rely on the protomagnetic powers of gravity and repulsion to do that instead of pure control power!” The more he thought about it, the more excited he got. Eyes shining brightly, he rushed out of his immortal’s cave.

As he walked along, he ran into a lot of people, but none of them were appropriate to help confirm whether his theory was correct or not. Eventually, he left Mount Daoseed and headed toward Green Crest Peak. Suddenly, he saw a familiar face.

“Chen Fei?” he said, eyes shining.

\*\*

Chen Fei was walking proudly down a path on Green Crest Peak, followed by two burly men who were fawning over him and showering him with flattery.

“Congratulations on completing the trial by fire to enter the Inner Sect, Elder Brother Chen! You’re finally going to be an Inner Sect disciple!”

“Hahaha! From now on, Elder Brother Chen, you’re in Green Crest Peak’s Inner Sect! The whole world is at your fingertips! Next step, the heavens!”

Chen Fei's stuck his chin up as he walked along, reveling in his pride. After all the years that had gone by, he had finally advanced from the Outer Sect to the Inner Sect. As he strutted along smugly, he was about to respond to the two men when he suddenly heard someone calling out his name.

A twinge of displeasure ran through his heart. Snorting coldly, he looked around and said, "Everybody on Green Crest Peak calls me Elder Brother Chen! What blind fool dares to disrespect me by using my full name!?"

Seeing no one in the immediate vicinity, he subconsciously looked up into the air, and saw Bai Xiaochun flying toward him.

"It's Bai Xiaochun!! Sect Uncle Bai!!" Chen Fei's scalp began tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. A piercing shriek escaped his lips, and all of his smugness and pride collapsed. The two burly men on either side of him also began to shake in anxiety and fear.

Those two men were the same men who had ambushed Bai Xiaochun with Chen Fei all those years ago, only to be taught a harsh lesson in return. Of course, as Bai Xiaochun's status in the sect grew, their fear of him also increased.

That had been compounded by the fact that Qian Dajin ended up being suddenly sent out on a dangerous mission. He had never returned, and rumor had it that he had died outside the sect. The presumption, of course, was that Bai Xiaochun was behind it all, which left them even more terrified than before.



Eventually, though, they came to believe that Bai Xiaochun had forgotten about them. Gradually, they relaxed, convinced that there would be no further negative ramifications. But now, Bai Xiaochun had come seeking them out, and the result was that their hearts were pounding in terror.

Trembling, Chen Fei quickly clasped hand and bowed deeply. “Disciple Chen Fei offers greetings, Sect Uncle Bai. Sect Uncle Bai, you are the most powerful person in the sect, a cultivator whose legend will be passed down through the ages, someone who will live as long as the heavens, invincible in the whole world!”

The two burly men also shouted similar words until their voices grew hoarse.

Bai Xiaochun was shocked to find that Chen Fei really was so gifted at speaking. Looking very serious, he said, “Cut the crap! Do you really think Bai Xiaochun is the type of person who likes to be brown-nosed!?”

However, despite the words coming out of his mouth, a gleam of approval could be seen in his eyes, and even a bit of encouragement.

## Chapter 182: My Precious Pearl....

---

Chen Fei hesitated for a moment, but seeing that Bai Xiaochun seemed to be encouraging him to keep going, he proceeded, “Sect Uncle Bai, I’m not flattering you, I’m just telling you how I really feel! Sect Uncle Bai, you’re a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment expert, and the legacy echelon-designate. You’re a future patriarch of the Spirit Stream Sect! You’ll naturally live as long as the heavens, and in the future will surely prove to be invincible in the world!”

“Quit your jabbering!” Bai Xiaochun said, waving his hand and looking very displeased.

Chen Fei felt a bit sick to his stomach, but continued on with the flattery. “Sect Uncle Bai, it’s not just me who thinks this. All of the disciples are talking about it! Everyone is saying that Sect Uncle Bai is as righteous as the heavens. He’s a genius among Chosen, someone who crushes all others in his generation. He’s a qilin incarnate, and one of the most handsome people in existence!”

Bai Xiaochun listened on and felt wonderful. After a while, he felt bad about trying to test out the Human Controlling Grand Magic on Chen Fei, so he simply stuck his chin up in the air, flicked his sleeve, and flew away.

Chen Fei and his two friends breathed sighs of relief. As for the burly men, they looked at Chen Fei with more admiration than ever.

“Elder Brother Chen, you definitely deserve to be regarded as brilliantly divine. If it weren’t for you, we would have faced calamity this day....”

Wiping away the cold sweat on his brow, Chen Fei had to admit that he really had been thinking on his feet. “Humph! You’d have a hard time finding anyone in the sect that understands Sect Uncle Bai better than me!”

Proud of himself, he led his two friends off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun scoured the south bank, but couldn’t find anyone else to practice the Human Controlling Grand Magic on. Next he went to the north bank. By that time it was late into the night. Unfortunately, he still hadn’t found a suitable subject. Sighing to himself about how good-natured he was, he returned to Mount Daoseed. Then, as he was walking along a mountain path, he looked up and saw Shangguan Tianyou flying through the air, wearing the Daoist robe of an elder. As he flew along, he noticed Bai Xiaochun, but simply snorted inwardly and pretended not to see him. The bad feelings between the two caused a cold, arrogant glint to appear in his eyes as he prepared to fly on his way.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the arrogant Shangguan Tianyou, old grievances rose up in his heart. Chuckling, he extended his right hand and mumbled something under his breath as he pointed his finger at Shangguan Tianyou.

A tremor ran through Shangguan Tianyou as his Daoist elder’s robe suddenly constricted around him.

His face fell, and his cultivation base exploded with power as he attempted to stop the clothing from affecting his movements. As for Bai Xiaochun, he poured more power into his efforts. In the blink of an eye, Shangguan Tianyou's clothing became a battlefield.

Then a boom echoed out, and Shangguan Tianyou staggered backward a few steps. As he did, his robe was shredded into pieces, drifting away in the wind to reveal his naked body.

His jaw dropped.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw also dropped.

The jaws of nearby Foundation Establishment elders... also dropped.

Shangguan Tianyou let out a piercing howl as he threw another robe on. Eyes bloodshot, hair in disarray, he raved, "Bai Xiaochun!!"

With that, he shot toward Bai Xiaochun, mind filled with only one thought: no matter what happened, he would take Bai Xiaochun down. He didn't even think about whether or not he was strong enough to do such a thing.

In his mind, Bai Xiaochun was a walking disaster, and if he were left alive, the Spirit Stream Sect would definitely be brought to

ruin.

Bai Xiaochun immediately fled. “What’s going on? How come it didn’t work?”

When he saw how enraged Shangguan Tianyou was, he actually felt a bit bad, but before he could even explain, Shangguan Tianyou was bearing down on him with murderous intent.

“Sect Nephew Shangguan, this was a misunderstanding!” he shrieked as he sped along. “A misunderstanding, I tell you...!” By that point, he was already back in his immortal’s cave. However, when Shangguan Tianyou heard the term ‘sect nephew,’ his rage burned even hotter. He stood outside the immortal’s cave, completely livid, howling in rage. Eventually, though, he could do nothing but grit his teeth and leave.

Bai Xiaochun sat in his immortal’s cave racking his brains. A few days later, he slapped his thigh.

“I was thinking about it the wrong way!

“Controlling the clothing is definitely not a good idea. Clothing is weak, and can’t withstand the force. Not unless it was made from jewels or something! The true Human Controlling Grand Magic is about controlling the smaller components of a person’s body. For example, their skin, flesh, blood, and bones. When all of that is accomplished, then I’ll truly have control power over my opponent!

“Unfortunately, my cultivation base isn’t high enough yet. I need a much stronger foundation in control power. For now, I need to make some sort of device that has inherent control power built into it!” His eyes began to shine brightly. The more he thought about the idea, the more it made sense. The next day, he scoured the sect for just such a device, but unfortunately, found nothing that worked. Just when he was starting to despair, he suddenly pulled out his Protomagnetic Wings. After studying them for a moment, his eyes began to shine brightly.

“In the arcane pocket realm, I gained some enlightenment of protomagnetic power. Now I can use a bit of repulsion power, as well as a slight gravitational force, to produce that illusory pearl....” After some more thought, his right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he pointed out. Instantly, a stream of qi emerged from within the wings, which flowed out onto Bai Xiaochun’s palm and transformed into an illusory pearl.

Upon closer examination, it was possible to see two types of auras inside the pearl, one of them pushing away, and the other pulling in. Their balance formed a cycle that acted as a vessel.

After a moment of thought, Bai Xiaochun’s expression filled with determination.

“Spiritual power is the foundation for all cultivators. Control power comes when the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation takes spiritual power and fuses it into one’s will.” Bai Xiaochun attempted to do just that. Pouring his spiritual power into the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation caused its fluctuations to change. When those fluctuations entered his own will, it became

control power, which he infused into the pearl.

Time passed. A day later, Bai Xiaochun's face was pale, but his expression was one of excitement. Retracting his hand, he sat down to perform some breathing exercises.

A month later, the result of Bai Xiaochun's madness was that a terrifying amount of control power had built up in the pearl. Only then did he finally stop.

Looking at the pearl excitedly, he said, "This is definitely going to work. There's a shocking amount of control power built up in the pearl. Once it erupts out, that power will definitely be enough to drive my Human Controlling Grand Magic!"

Just when he was about to go test it out, he stopped in his tracks, thought for a moment, and suddenly didn't feel as confident.

"No, it's not ready yet. I need to add some more control power!" Gritting his teeth, he sat down cross-legged. After spending three more months pouring power into it, the amount of control power contained in the pearl was hair-raisingly terrifying. There was so much that it spilled out of the pearl, distorting the air in shocking fashion.

All of the objects within 30 meters of Bai Xiaochun were floating up into the air and emanating cracking sounds. Even the pebbles in the walls of the immortal's cave were affected.

Eyes crimson, Bai Xiaochun cackled madly as he emerged from his immortal's cave.

“Bai Xiaochun's Human Controlling Grand Magic will finally make its debut in the world!” Laughing uproariously, he searched the area around his immortal's cave, only to find that nobody was around. Even as he was looking around in confusion, he noticed several beams of light shooting through the air toward the summit of Mount Daoseed. Apparently, the sect leader had called a meeting of the Foundation Establishment elders, for reasons unknown.

Puzzled, Bai Xiaochun flew up into the air.

Soon he caught sight of the square outside of the sect leader's personal hall. A large number of Foundation Establishment elders were gathered there, and all of them were conversing with each other in hushed tones. Somber expressions could be seen on their faces; apparently, something big had occurred.

“What happened?” Bai Xiaochun thought. He had been so focused on his Human Controlling Grand Magic that he hadn't paid much attention to his jade slips. Flying over to the group, he was just about to start asking questions, when three of the Foundation Establishment cultivators about thirty meters away from him, one of whom was Lu Tianlei, suddenly looked over at him in shock!

They had noticed Bai Xiaochun earlier, as well as his disheveled hair and strange appearance. As soon as he got close enough to them, tremors ran through their bodies, and they completely lost control of their cultivation base power. Energy surged out



explosively, causing crushing pressure to weigh down, and simultaneously shredding their robes into pieces.

Shivering, eyes bloodshot, they quickly put on new garments and simultaneously fell back. Enraged, they looked over at Bai Xiaochun, convinced that he was up to more shenanigans!

“What are you doing, Bai Xiaochun?!”

However, even as the words left their mouths, Bai Xiaochun continued forward obliviously. At the same time, all of the Foundation Establishment cultivators within thirty meters of him looked on with wide eyes as their clothing was also shredded.

Before Bai Xiaochun could even react, dozens of Foundation Establishment cultivators were robe-less, including Shangguan Tianyou.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Dammit, what’s he doing!?” The Foundation Establishment cultivators burned with rage. Throwing new clothes on, they were about to storm over to Bai Xiaochun to teach him a lesson, when they realized that anyone who got within thirty meters of him would have their clothing destroyed. Terrified, they all backed up.

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun retreated to the main gate of the hall, scalp tingling and heart thumping. He already knew that he had caused a major catastrophe again.

“Don’t blame me!” he said. “It’s this pearl!” He nervously held the pearl up into the air, which caused rippling distortions to spread out for thirty meters in all directions. Bai Xiaochun appeared to be the only one unaffected.

It was at this point that Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong heard the commotion outside, and stormed out through the gate with some of the prime elders. As soon as they appeared out in the open, they stepped into the danger zone surrounding Bai Xiaochun.

“No!!” Bai Xiaochun shrieked. “Elder Brother Sect Leader, prime elders! Get back!” Eyes wide, he tried to throw the pearl in the opposite direction, but it was too late.

Zheng Yuandong’s clothing was instantly shredded to pieces and blown away by the breeze, leaving him standing there as shocked as a wooden chicken.

The prime elders’ once solemn faces completely changed when their clothing was destroyed. They tried to unleash power to stop it, but it did no good, and soon they were all standing there naked.

Of course, it had nothing to do with the power of Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base, only the strange properties of the pearl. The clothing was not destroyed directly by Bai Xiaochun, but by the pearl. It wasn’t his fault!

As soon as the naked bodies of the sect leader and the prime elders were revealed, everything went deathly quiet.

## Chapter 183: I'll Be Back Soon....

---

In the blink of an eye, Zheng Yuandong waved his hand, and a new robe appeared. However, the moment it settled down onto him, it was also shredded to pieces.

Shrieking, Bai Xiaochun flew into the air to flee. He was already soaked with cold sweat at the thought of the calamity he had wrought. If he had only destroyed the clothing of his Elder Brother sect leader, it might not have been such a huge deal. After all, he was his Junior Brother. But the prime elders had also been affected.

The blank looks in the eyes of those prime elders caused Bai Xiaochun's scalp to tingle on the verge of exploding.

“Bai. Xiao. CHUN!!” Zheng Yuandong howled, throwing on another set of clothing. As his voice boomed like thunder, rage burned in the eyes of the prime elders, and their cultivation bases erupted like volcanoes.

All of them immediately flew toward Bai Xiaochun.

Screaming, Bai Xiaochun prepared to flee at top speed.

“It wasn't on purpose....”

“Shut up!” raged the prime elders, their voices deafeningly loud.

“They’re trying to kill me! They’re trying to kill me!!” This time, Bai Xiaochun really was afraid. He immediately pulled out the Protomagnetic Wings and his Golden Crow Sword, then unleashed all the power of his Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivation base to flee.

All of the Foundation Establishment cultivators were furious. Their anger had been building for some time thanks to Bai Xiaochun’s torments, and to see the prime elders going after him left them laughing out loud.

Shangguan Tianyou seemed especially worked up. “Now the sect finally realizes what Bai Xiaochun is like! If this walking disaster stays in the sect, we’ll all be driven to destruction!”

Hou Yunfei was in the crowd, sighing and smiling bitterly.

Bai Xiaochun was scared out of his mind, and tears were welling up in his eyes. This time, he didn’t feel wronged; he knew that he had been responsible for a major disaster, and now had no choice but to flee for his life. In the blink of an eye, he was off in the distance, heading toward the north bank, with the prime elders hot on his tail. Almost as soon as he arrived, the north bank disciples heard his miserable shriek. Gloating smiles appeared on their faces as they flew up into the air to see what was happening.

However, as soon as they did, Bai Xiaochun whizzed by, and their clothing was shredded away.

Their first reaction was shock, but then the screams rose up.

Bai Xiaochun was on the verge of weeping. “Prime elders, I’m sorry. Please don’t kill me...! I’m a Prestige disciple, I have a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivation base, I’m the legacy echelon-designate...!”

As for the prime elders, they were so mad they were a bit numb, and at the same time, astonished by Bai Xiaochun’s speed.

The north bank instantly devolved into chaos. Wherever Bai Xiaochun went, anyone within thirty meters of him had their clothes completely destroyed in shocking fashion.

Around this time, Bruiser was frolicking around when he looked up and suddenly got very anxious. He even threw his head back and howled, and from the sound of it, it was backed by power equivalent to the ninth or tenth level of Qi Condensation. Countless battle beasts on the north bank responded by also throwing their heads back and howling.

Their masters tried to stop them, but all of the affected battle beasts seemed to have been influenced by Bruiser. The entire group apparently wanted to fly up into the air and defend Bai Xiaochun from the prime elders.

Before Bruiser could actually rally the battle beasts, a violet rope shot out from thin air and wrapped around the screaming Bai Xiaochun. Instantly, he was bound up, caught by one of the prime elders.

Another of the prime elders carefully managed to take the pearl away, somehow keeping his clothes intact in the process. Then he kicked Bai Xiaochun hard on the rear end.

“I’ve shed my own blood for the sect!” Bai Xiaochun screamed. “I’ve performed meritorious service....”

“How dare you fight back, you little brat!” Although the prime elder’s expression was one of pure rage, Bai Xiaochun’s terrified appearance had him almost laughing.

Bai Xiaochun looked like he was about to cry. However, even as he shrieked miserably, he glanced down at the enraged Bruiser and gave him a look that indicated he shouldn’t interfere.

Bruiser seemed surprised, but he understood the look in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, and lowered his head.

The prime elders noticed this, and were surprised. Then they recalled how even the patriarchs had taken a liking to this particular battle beast, and their eyes began to gleam with admiration at how it had attempted to protect its master.

“Now that’s how Spirit Stream Sect battle beasts are supposed to act!” The prime elders kicked Bai Xiaochun a few more times, then hauled him wailing back to Mount Daoseed.

Upon their departure, silence reigned on the north bank, followed by a resounding cheer. However, the cheering faded away

quickly as people recalled Bai Xiaochun's status in the sect. They knew that even though he would probably be punished, it wouldn't be too severely. Then they wondered what would happen in the future. As Bai Xiaochun grew more and more important, it was impossible to imagine what terrifying events might occur.

“When is Bai Xiaochun gonna grow up...?”

“Ai. What a fiendish devil!!”

Soon, word spread that Bai Xiaochun's punishment was to sweep the pathways on Mount Daoseed every day for three months. During that time, he could often be seen with a broom, keeping Mount Daoseed completely free from dust.

To him, it was pure torture....

“Hey, this is a mountain! It's supposed to have dirt on it! How am I supposed to keep it clean!?” Scowling on the verge of tears, he endured through the three months, then returned to his immortal's cave, where he sat next to his lake, staring up into the sky, looking completely miserable.

“I didn't do it on purpose! I'm a Prestige disciple. I'm the legacy echelon-designate. I'm a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment expert! I'm the Junior Brother of the sect leader! I've performed meritorious service for the sect! I've shed my own blood....

“This is ridiculous! They even took my pearl away and won't give

it back....” Sighing, he patted his bag of holding and gritted his teeth.

“Ah, whatever. I can’t stay in the Spirit Stream Sect for the time being. I might as well go to the Blood Stream Sect and try to get that relic of eternal indestructibility. The Blood Stream Sect is the enemy of the Spirit Stream Sect anyway, so I can spend some time there concocting pills for my Human Controlling Grand Magic!” Having made his mind up, he went to talk to Zheng Yuandong the next morning.

When Zheng Yuandong saw Bai Xiaochun approaching, his expression was grim. However, after hearing what he had to say, that he wanted to leave the sect to get some experience, his eyes went wide with disbelief.

“Did you just say you want to leave the sect to get some experience?”

“Yeah! You were right all along, Elder Brother sect leader. Maybe I am a piece of immortal steel. Without tempering, I’ll never become an immortal sword. After some thought, I’ve decided to go out and get some experience!” Bai Xiaochun even smacked his chest proudly to emphasize his words. “Elder Brother, I know you don’t want me to leave, but don’t even try to persuade me to stay. I, Bai Xiaochun, have already decided–”

Before he could even finish speaking, Zheng Yuandong stepped forward and gripped him by the shoulders. “Excellent idea!” he said excitedly. “I’m very proud of you, Junior Brother. If you want to go out and get some experience, you have my blessing!! Are you



leaving now?”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun responded, a bit taken aback. “Well I’m not really ready yet, I still need some–”

“What do you need, Xiaochun?” Zheng Yuandong interrupted, sounding very serious. “Just say the word! Spirit stones? Medicinal pills? Life-saving magical items? You’re a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment expert, and also the legacy echelon-designate. I can make a special exception to open the treasure storehouses and give you whatever you want!

“However, you have to remember that you can’t leave the Eastwood Continent. Of course, the Eastwood Continent is a very big place, so there are plenty of places you can go!” Having made his decision, he took Bai Xiaochun to the treasure storehouses to let him select some life-saving magical items.

He also gave him plenty of spirit stones and medicinal pills. At the same time, he enthusiastically announced the matter to the rest of the sect....

Later that afternoon, Bai Xiaochun stood outside the main gate, looking a bit dazed. It was only that morning that he had gone to talk to Zheng Yuandong about leaving to get experience. All of the preparations and formalities that needed to be handled had been quickly taken care of by Zheng Yuandong and the other elders.

Currently, he was standing there with the sect leader and the six peak lords, as well as a large group of elders and Inner Sect

disciples. It was quite a big affair. It almost seemed as if everyone from both the south and north banks were there, anxiously awaiting the moment when Bai Xiaochun actually left.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times. For some reason, the situation seemed familiar. Without even thinking about it, he said, “Ladies and gentlemen, Junior Brothers and Sisters, Sect Nephews and Nieces, I shall miss all of you....”

The people in the crowd exchanged glances, and moments later, looks of sorrow appeared in their eyes. Clearly, they didn’t want to part with Bai Xiaochun.

Zheng Yuandong stepped forward, a kind look on his face as he said, “Xiaochun, you’re the most outstanding disciple in the Spirit Stream Sect. Your path lies ahead of you! Keep going forward. Step out into your future. Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten what I told you about the Heavenspan Sea? You haven’t forgotten about your path to living forever, have you?!”

“We cultivators can’t be wishy-washy. Since you’ve decided to go out and get experience, you can’t change your mind. Xiaochun, your Elder Brother will always support you!” With that, he clasped Bai Xiaochun encouragingly on the shoulder.

Soon, more voices rang out.

“Yeah, that’s right. Junior Brother Bai, getting experience is a part of life! Just keep on going, and don’t look back!”

“Elder Brother Bai, the reason cultivators can rebuke the heavens is because our hearts are large enough to hold all the lands within them. As soon as you go out, you’ll be able to see the world for yourself. How could not develop a heart big enough to contain all the lands? I’m certain that your heart will be able to hold the whole world!”

“I really am gonna live forever....” Bai Xiaochun thought, trembling. Eyes filling with determination, he looked around at everyone he knew and nodded. Then he turned and walked off into the distance.

As soon as he disappeared over the horizon, the sorrow in the eyes of the crowd was replaced by joy. Zheng Yuandong was so excited he was trembling.

“This time, he’s really gone. He’s not just moved from the south bank to the north bank, he’s actually left the sect. The heavens do have eyes! He’s actually left to get experience!!”

“Is the devil really gone? I almost can’t believe it! Is this real?!?!”

“Hahaha! I’ve been praying every day for this miracle, and now it’s happened. The north bank will finally have peace and quiet!!”

“The south bank will no longer live a life of fear!”

“A new age has begun!!” As their expressions of joy rose up, some people from the south bank produced gongs and drums, and began

to bang them loudly.

Not willing to be outdone, the people from the north bank did the same. That day was a day of happiness and rejoicing for the entire Spirit Stream Sect....

Off in the distance, Bai Xiaochun coughed dryly at the sound of the banging gongs and drums. A wistful look appeared in his eyes as he stuck his chin in the air and swished his sleeve. Looking more melancholy than ever, he said, “You still miss me, huh? Don’t feel too bad, fellow Daoists, I’ll be back soon!” He took a deep breath, and the determination in his eyes grew stronger.

“Blood Stream Sect, I’m sorry to say that Bai Xiaochun is coming, and he’s infiltrating you as a spy!” With that, he sped off into the distance.

End of Book 1

# Table of Contents

## [A Will Eternal](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Chapter 1: I'm Bai Xiaochun](#)

[Chapter 2: The Ovens](#)

[Chapter 3: Six Lines Of Truth](#)

[Chapter 4: Spirit Enhancement](#)

[Chapter 5: What Happens If I Lose My Poor Little Life?](#)

[Chapter 6: Drunk On Spiritual Energy](#)

[Chapter 7: Bonding The Turtle-Wok](#)

[Chapter 8: We're Gonna Go All Out!](#)

[Chapter 9: Age-Prolonging Longevity-Enhancing Pill](#)

[Chapter 10: Elder Brother, Don't Go!](#)

[Chapter 11: Hou Xiaomei](#)

[Chapter 12: On The Bamboo Fence](#)

[Chapter 13: You're Coming Too!](#)

[Chapter 14: Third Elder Brother? Third Elder Sister?](#)

[Chapter 15: Undying Live Forever Technique!](#)

[Chapter 16: Meticulously Careful](#)

[Chapter 17: Little Turtle](#)

[Chapter 18: Drawing The Attention Of The Crowd!](#)

[Chapter 19: The Legend Of The Weasel](#)

[Chapter 20: Feathers Scattered About](#)

[Chapter 21: Big Bro Xiaochun....](#)

[Chapter 22: Don't Worry, Elder Sister!](#)

[Chapter 23: The Chicken-Thieving Fiend](#)

[Chapter 24: Who Are You?](#)

[Chapter 25: Invincible Iron Skin!](#)

[Chapter 26: How Were The Spirit Tail Chickens?](#)

[Chapter 27: Th-that's... Bamboo?](#)

[Chapter 28: Pressure Is Motivation](#)

[Chapter 29: Lightness-In-Heaviness](#)

[Chapter 30: Bring It On!](#)

[Chapter 31: Humiliated!](#)

[Chapter 32: Heaven-Defying Luck](#)

[Chapter 33: Disqualify Bai Xiaochun!](#)  
[Chapter 34: Crushing It In Plants And Vegetation](#)  
[Chapter 35: Another Encounter With Xu Baocai](#)  
[Chapter 36: The Little Turtle Proclaims Superiority!](#)  
[Chapter 37: Heaviness-In-Lightness](#)  
[Chapter 38: Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning](#)  
[Chapter 39: Crushing....](#)  
[Chapter 40: Pursuing The Pinnacle](#)  
[Chapter 41: The Effectiveness Of Spirit Enhancement](#)  
[Chapter 42: Promotion Test](#)  
[Chapter 43: Slow... So Slow....](#)  
[Chapter 44: The Sun Is Rising](#)  
[Chapter 45: I Could Kill You, Easy!](#)  
[Chapter 46: Mission For The Hall Of Justice!](#)  
[Chapter 47: Xiaochun Ventures Out Of The Sect](#)  
[Chapter 48: The Big Wide World](#)  
[Chapter 49: Luo Chen Clan](#)  
[Chapter 50: Bizarre Courtyard](#)  
[Chapter 51: Elder Brother Feng, Such A Good Guy!](#)  
[Chapter 52: Luo Chen Betrayal](#)  
[Chapter 53: Bravery!](#)  
[Chapter 54: Principles!](#)  
[Chapter 55: Crown Prince Chen Heng!](#)  
[Chapter 56: Sticking Together For Survival](#)  
[Chapter 57: You Have To Stay Alive!](#)  
[Chapter 58: The Cornered Beast Fights!](#)  
[Chapter 59: You Die, I Live!](#)  
[Chapter 60: Fierce Life-Or-Death Battle](#)  
[Chapter 61: Fatal Attack!](#)  
[Chapter 62: Killing A Chicken With A Battle-Axe!](#)  
[Chapter 63: Crushing The Luo Chen Clan!](#)  
[Chapter 64: Morale And A Funeral](#)  
[Chapter 65: Shou Lingren](#)  
[Chapter 66: Going Through Hell Or High Water For The Sect](#)  
[Chapter 67: Elder Brother, Where's Our Master?](#)  
[Chapter 68: Sect Nephew, Don't Rush Off!](#)  
[Chapter 69: Bai Xiaochun, Come Offer Greetings To The Young Lord](#)  
[Chapter 70: Hey, Elder Brother Li](#)  
[Chapter 71: Living Prestige Scion](#)

[Chapter 72: The Sect Has Rules](#)  
[Chapter 73: Who Did This!?](#)  
[Chapter 74: So, It Was Bai Xiaochun!](#)  
[Chapter 75: I've Been Wrongly Accused!!](#)  
[Chapter 76: Eighth Level Of Qi Condensation!](#)  
[Chapter 77: Auction](#)  
[Chapter 78: What Are They Talking About?](#)  
[Chapter 79: Xiaochun, We Believe You](#)  
[Chapter 80: The Talents Of Big Fatty Zhang](#)  
[Chapter 81: Will-Spirit Grand Magic](#)  
[Chapter 82: South Bank Chosen](#)  
[Chapter 83: Elder Zhou, You're Up](#)  
[Chapter 84: Unbelievable Acceleration](#)  
[Chapter 85: He... Took First?](#)  
[Chapter 86: That Again....](#)  
[Chapter 87: Outer Sect Chosen Battles](#)  
[Chapter 88: The North Bank's Strongest](#)  
[Chapter 89: Just Concede](#)  
[Chapter 90: Archenemy Of The North Bank](#)  
[Chapter 91: The Enraged North Bank](#)  
[Chapter 92: The Despair Of Gongsun Wan'er](#)  
[Chapter 93: What A Useful Pill](#)  
[Chapter 94: Sect Uncle Bai, We're On The Same Side](#)  
[Chapter 95: That's Not How You Use Swords!](#)  
[Chapter 96: Fighting Ghostfang](#)  
[Chapter 97: I Am Big Fatty Zhang!](#)  
[Chapter 98: Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture](#)  
[Chapter 99: Knock Knock](#)  
[Chapter 100: Still Won't Apologize To Your Sect Uncle Bai?](#)  
[Chapter 101: Waterswamp Kingdom And Protomagnetic Wings!](#)  
[Chapter 102: Is Anyone Around?](#)  
[Chapter 103: I Want To Serve The Sect!](#)  
[Chapter 104: I Guarantee....](#)  
[Chapter 105: Massive Animal Jailbreak!](#)  
[Chapter 106: Crazy Rabbit!](#)  
[Chapter 107: Lightning Detox Grand Magic](#)  
[Chapter 108: Big Fatty Zhang, Loyal Friend](#)  
[Chapter 109: A Light Rain On Violet Cauldron Peak....](#)  
[Chapter 110: Exiled To 10,000 Snakes Valley](#)

[Chapter 111: Making Contact With The Shackles](#)  
[Chapter 112: Two Hearts Intertwined, At Long Last Reunited](#)  
[Chapter 113: Something Really Bad....](#)  
[Chapter 114: Li Qinghou Understands....](#)  
[Chapter 115: No! Don't Spread That!](#)  
[Chapter 116: The Founder Appears!!](#)  
[Chapter 118: Not A Warm Welcome....](#)  
[Chapter 119: It's Spring, And I Planted My Beastbirth Seed](#)  
[Chapter 120: Fight Me, Bai Xiaochun!](#)  
[Chapter 121: Paper Cranes Fill The Sky....](#)  
[Chapter 122: I Accept This Challenge!](#)  
[Chapter 123: Fight!](#)  
[Chapter 124: Human Controlling Grand Magic](#)  
[Chapter 125: The Ol' Nightstalker Beast....](#)  
[Chapter 126: Build Up To Success](#)  
[Chapter 127: Soul Floating In The Void](#)  
[Chapter 128: Alert](#)  
[Chapter 129: Bone Spur!](#)  
[Chapter 130: The Blooming Of The Beastbirth Flower](#)  
[Chapter 131: For The Contributions!](#)  
[Chapter 132: Life Essence Ancestral Awakening Blood](#)  
[Chapter 133: It's Not Worth Trying, Kiddo](#)  
[Chapter 134: The Spirit Is Still There....](#)  
[Chapter 135: The North Bank Erupts!](#)  
[Chapter 136: They All Came Over](#)  
[Chapter 137: My Battle Beast!](#)  
[Chapter 138: Bruiser's Hobby....](#)  
[Chapter 139: I Didn't Do It!](#)  
[Chapter 140: Foundation Establishment Holy Land](#)  
[Chapter 141: Fallen Sword Abyss!](#)  
[Chapter 142: A Host Of Chosen!](#)  
[Chapter 143: That Was Definitely On Purpose!](#)  
[Chapter 144: Lord Bai Is Gonna Fight You To The Death](#)  
[Chapter 145: Sentenced To Death!](#)  
[Chapter 146: Power!](#)  
[Chapter 147: A Strange Pill Appears!](#)  
[Chapter 148: Come Play With Me, Big Bro](#)  
[Chapter 149: Whether Sect Uncle Bai Wants It To Or Not](#)  
[Chapter 150: Big Bro Has Something Else To Do....](#)



[Chapter 151: You Wanna Fight Me, Bai Xiaochun?!](#)  
[Chapter 152: You're Shameless! No, You're Shameless!](#)  
[Chapter 153: Let The Tideflow Begin!](#)  
[Chapter 154: Striving For A Great Dao!](#)  
[Chapter 155: Breaking The First Shackle!](#)  
[Chapter 156: Wanna Kill Me?!](#)  
[Chapter 157: Fighting Back!](#)  
[Chapter 158: Spirit Stream Sect, Defend Bai Xiaochun!](#)  
[Chapter 159: Undying Gold Skin!](#)  
[Chapter 160: Slaughtering Chosen!](#)  
[Chapter 161: Wreck Your Tideflow!](#)  
[Chapter 162: Heavenstring Energy](#)  
[Chapter 163: No Quarter Asked, None Given!](#)  
[Chapter 164: So What!?](#)  
[Chapter 165: Seizing Heavenstring Energy!](#)  
[Chapter 166: Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!](#)  
[Chapter 167: Nine Serenities Ghost Domain!](#)  
[Chapter 168: Incognito....](#)  
[Chapter 169: Hou Yunqing Never Lies](#)  
[Chapter 170: Goddess Lingfei](#)  
[Chapter 171: Assassinate Bai Xiaochun!](#)  
[Chapter 172: I'm Sorry, Bai Xiaochun](#)  
[Chapter 173: The World!](#)  
[Chapter 174: Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!](#)  
[Chapter 175: Please Behave Yourself, Elder Brother Bai](#)  
[Chapter 176: The Only Hidden Legacy](#)  
[Chapter 177: Heavenspan Dharma Eye!](#)  
[Chapter 178: So Little Mask, You Want To Play Hide-And-Seek With Lord Bai?](#)  
[Chapter 179: I'll Tell You A Secret](#)  
[Chapter 180: Could It Be The Will Of The Heavens...?](#)  
[Chapter 181: Uncrushable....](#)  
[Chapter 182: My Precious Pearl....](#)  
[Chapter 183: I'll Be Back Soon....](#)